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VINCENT SHEEAN

An Adventure of a Foreign Correspondent

THE *Chicago Tribune*, which called itself in daily print "The World's Greatest Newspaper," was actually, in 1922, perhaps the most opulent enterprise of its kind in the United States. Its huge profits in the years after the War were partly spent in creating new magazines and newspapers, of which the *Daily News* in New York was one. Another of its children, a small thing but expensive, was the daily European Edition, published in Paris. The editorial offices which housed it also served as headquarters for the Chicago Tribune Foreign News Service, which supplied European news by cable to a large syndicate of American papers. There were eight or nine special correspondents in the Foreign News Service—the F.N.S.—and theirs were not sedentary lives.

The prime characteristic of the F.N.S. was its nervous energy; it kept its members leaping like angry fleas from one capital to another. The F.N.S. sought for trouble, and such was the disorganisation of the states of Europe that it was seldom disappointed. No sooner did the Russians begin to quiet down than the French developed a new grudge against Germany; when the French and Germans were lulled into

truce the Italians went mad and started to bite one another; even Spaniards could not lie quiet through the agitations of a brave new world. In this scurrying pursuit of unhappiness I spent three years and a half.

I

Madrid was a bright city of broad streets, new buildings, and a government which pretended to give its subjects every hope for a glowing future. Primo de Rivera, a worthy gentleman from Estremadura, and officer of the King, a fat man who liked good food and good wine, a Spaniard of Spaniards, thought himself called to bring his country into line for the dubious advantages of an Americanised Western world. In doing so, he destroyed the constitutional liberties of the country; but perhaps the American telephone monopoly and the new wireless station made up for all that.

It was in Madrid that I enjoyed one of the rare genuine comedies of these years—a fine bit of farce in which I played a part in spite of myself, aided by some of the improbable trappings of spy melodrama. Only in Primo de Rivera's Spain—a régime of purely personal government, where nobody knew *why* anything happened—could such an episode have taken place.

I had gone to Madrid from Paris, and consequently passed the frontier at Irun. The idea that my humble movements might be of any interest to the government of Spain never once occurred to me. I trundled along cheerfully in the great, luxurious, dawdling Sud-Express, gazing through windows which looked upon the barren hills of upper Castile and the cities of an unimaginably romantic past—Burgos, Avila. The truth (not too creditable to myself, but soon to be established beyond any doubt) was that Spain was altogether too romantic for me—too much like a play by Lope

de Vega, too improbable and grand, to strike at those particular inner areas which responded so eagerly to the appeal of Italian lakes and hills or the fields of England.

In Madrid I spent my days trying to get some idea of the successes and failures of Primo, the extent to which he had involved the monarchy in them, the strength of the opposition (if it existed), and the progress of the campaign in Morocco. It was this last chapter of interest which was to bring about the strange events I am about to describe—my arrest, the court-martial which never took place, and the *dossier* which accumulated under my name in the archives of the secret police.

In the daytime, therefore, I pursued the shifting course of the Directorio; but at night I had other occupations. I was fascinated by the theatres, particularly the most popular of them—those in which an endless succession of dancers and singers stretched across all hours of the night, coarse, indefatigable, and noisy. I used to haunt the Maravillas. I was much taken with the celebrated Andalusian dancer and singer, Dora la Cordobesita, whose performances I saw, for a while, nearly every night; it was a long time before her bursting vitality became monotonous. Some of the other *estrellas* made impressions of another order: there were La Argentinita, then a great idol in Madrid, who was best when she abandoned her cosmopolitan poses and danced the ordinary *iota*; Lolita Montez, an exquisite singer of Catalan *sainetes*; and above all, the gypsies—Pastora Imperio, the dancer Escudero, the guitarist Montoya.

Sometimes I visited a certain not very reputable house in the Calle O'Donnell, bringing Montoya and his *flamenco* singer (a son or nephew or grandson) with me. Montoya would supply the rolling, measured thunder over which the girls, one after another, would lift their voices in the competitive screech of the *flamenco*. Such visits took place very late at

night, after the theatres and restaurants were closed, and it never once occurred to me that they, too, would be of interest to the government of Spain.

II

I had been in Madrid for some time, engaged in nothing more conspiratorial than the occupations I have named, when a sudden attack of bronchitis put me to bed for about ten days. During that time I did my work in bed; my Spanish assistant, Francisco Ginestal of *El Sol*, used to come to the Palace Hotel every day with all the newspapers and with whatever else he had been able to find of interest. I wrote occasional dispatches in bed, in English, on my portable typewriter, and he took them to the post office to be telegraphed to Paris. The good man knew not a word of English, and was in consequence not responsible for what I wrote; but since our charge account at the post office was in his name as permanent local correspondent, it was, of course, his name that was signed at the bottom of each telegram.

One fine day Ginestal did not arrive. I was a little put out, but supposed his other affairs had taken up all his available time. I waited. The next day he did not come either; I telephoned to his house, but his wife was too ill to answer the telephone, and a maid (or friend or relative) was obviously unwilling to answer any question. On the third day, when he was still missing, I determined to go to the police and ask what had become of him.

It was in the morning. I had finished breakfast and was about to go out, hesitating only over what degree of muffling up was necessary to a recent bronchitis patient. Just then a knock came at my door; I opened it to find two solemn fat men, each the very spit of the detective the world over. The first of these, reciting in a gloomy, nasal voice, informed me

in pompous sentences that I was under arrest by order of His Majesty the King.

This seemed to me so fantastically improbable that I laughed and said so.

My friend the detective bowed; his silent partner bowed also; they shrugged their shoulders, spread their hands. The first one then showed me my own name, clearly printed on the paper he held in his hand, and followed by the words "Palace Hotel," with my room number. There was no possible doubt about it; for some inconceivable reason I was to be conducted forthwith to prison. I was allowed a few minutes to put my clothes and papers in order, but not to telephone to the American Embassy. Then, with a member of the secret police on either side of me (walking respectfully two or three steps behind), I went out of the hotel and got into a waiting taxi and was driven off.

The prison to which I was taken was called (I believe) the San Francisco—the one beyond the Royal Palace, indistinguishable from the other barracks and jails of the quarter. I was escorted solemnly into a small and very dirty waiting-room, where a number of silent, desperate-looking characters sat gloomily about on the bench which ran round the walls. I waited for perhaps an hour, divided between irritation and amusement. It did not seem possible that I had done anything to deserve political arrest and imprisonment; nor did it seem very likely that even a Spanish government would knowingly court the embarrassment which would follow such treatment of a foreigner—particularly when that foreigner was an American. To be an American was, in these matters, to be the most troublesome sort of foreigner in existence, susceptible and obstreperous, belonging to a singularly powerful, high-handed nation, which always made a fuss about its rights and usually got its own way. I had a shrewd idea that

somebody would get into trouble over this, but in the meanwhile there was plenty of time for my own carcass to incur a good deal of annoyance.

III

The door opened and I was summoned inside. The room was small, almost filled by a great desk laden with papers. Behind it sat a benignant, middle-aged officer in the uniform of an infantry colonel. He rose, smiled, shook hands, and motioned me to a seat before him.

"You are under arrest, Señor," he said pleasantly, "by the King's order, and will have to stand trial by court-martial."

"But why?"

"For a dispatch you sent to the *Chicago Tribune* five days ago. That is not, of course, the exact reason for the arrest; that is the cause. The reason given is . . ."

Here he turned over a few sheets of paper, reflected, and read aloud: ". . . tendentious informations with the design of bringing down the exchange value of the peseta."

After delivering this blow he looked up, smiled with the utmost politeness, and offered me a cigarette.

"You smoke, Señor? I believe you have enjoyed your stay in Madrid?"

"Yes, very much," I said. "But what about this dispatch? Did it do anything to bring down the exchange value of the peseta? I don't know or care anything about the exchange value of the peseta."

"Oh," said the Colonel, smiling gently, "of course the dispatch was not sent out. The Censor . . . you understand. . . . It is only that *if* it had been sent out it *would* have had a bad effect on the exchange value of the peseta."

He stopped, puffed his cigarette, allowed his eyes to rest in fatherly fashion upon me.

" We are greatly concerned about the exchange value of the peseta," he remarked.

" Does this mean that I must stay in jail ? " I asked. " Can't I telephone to the American Embassy ? And what dispatch are you talking about ? I can't remember sending anything which referred in any way to the peseta. Moreover, you say I am arrested by the King's order. The King is not aware of my existence. How could he order me to be arrested ? "

The Colonel, smoking placidly, leaning back in his chair, allowed the questions to spill out. Then he leaned forward, turned over some papers, extracted one, and pushed it toward me.

" That is His Majesty's order," he said.

And there, indeed, it was : a square of paper, like a half sheet of foolscap, across which was typewritten the instruction to " arrest the sender of Telegram No. XX35998," or whatever the number was. My name did not appear. This document, which consisted of two typewritten lines, was signed by Alfonso. It was a *lettre de cachet*—one of those famous military orders by which so many hundreds (and, later on, thousands) of Spaniards were thrown into prison without legal warrant and, often enough, without ever coming to trial even by court-martial. I had been told that Primo was accustomed to present these orders to the King in batches—and that the King, that docile monarch who had been born on the throne, who had sworn fealty to the outraged Constitution from childhood, signed them all. This, then, was a vivid proof that what I had heard had not been the invention of malcontents.

" And here is Telegram No. XX35998," said the Colonel politely. " Is it yours ? "

I inspected the two sheets of paper he handed me. They gave an account, a very vague and mild account, of the new

disaster which had just overcome the Spanish army in Morocco —an event which was then quite unknown in the world at large, and which my Spaniard, Ginestal, had heard about from returning officers. This disaster was, in fact (although I did not know it then), the Wad Lau–Sheshuan campaign, then just beginning—a terrible event which I was to verify myself on the battle line a few months later by the corpses and skeletons of Spanish soldiers; it was, as we sat there in the prison of San Francisco, going on; but my telegram gave no real hint of the situation. It said simply that another defeat, of uncertain extent and importance, had taken place in Morocco, and that it seemed likely the Spanish would have to retreat altogether to the cities on the coast.

" I don't see anything criminal in this telegram," I said. " Of course I wrote it. But why not? It doesn't say a word about the peseta."

" The peseta is falling," said the Colonel dreamily. " The peseta is falling every day, in London, in Paris, in New York. It is very serious about the peseta."

" I don't see what that has to do with me."

" Señor, why does the peseta fall? I fear it is because of telegrams such as this, printed in various great newspapers in England and America. It is not possible for us to allow such things. . . . Do you want to telephone to the American Embassy? "

He rang a bell and instructed the soldier who answered to put through a call to the American Embassy, for the *chargé d'affaires—encargado de negocios*. Then he leaned back, put his finger-tips together, and gazed at me again. I was getting rather uncomfortable under this persistent regard.

" So you like Spanish dancing, eh? " he remarked. " You visit a certain house in the Calle O'Donnell. . . . Ah, Señor, young men should be careful of their conduct when they are

in your position. I see there is no great harm in you; I shall tell you, then. You must be very careful what you do, where you go. Everything you do is reported by the secret police. Your letters—your telegrams—you should really be more discreet."

I was mystified into silence. The Colonel touched a great pile of papers on his desk.

"There is your *dossier*, Señor," he said gently. "It is very full. . . . For instance, what did you mean by sending such a telegram as this?"

He fished out a telegraph form and showed it to me. When I read it it was impossible to keep from laughing; the whole thing had turned to farce. The telegram said: "*Vivent la France et les patates frites!*" and was signed (grave, suspicious circumstance!) with my nickname instead of my professional name.

"You will perhaps find it difficult to believe, Señor Coronel," I said, trying to speak seriously. "That telegram is a joke—a stupid joke, but nothing more. Some American friends of mine, named Bullitt, who live in Paris, have just had a child; when I received the letter telling me about it, I sent this telegram to the mother. It means nothing at all, you see."

The Colonel looked gravely at the telegram, read it again, and made a dutiful effort to find it funny.

"I see," he said, "a joke. An American joke. It was not so regarded at the Censura."

He sighed heavily, pondering over it. The telephone beside him rang at last; communication was not quick in Spain then. The American *encargado de negocios*—Hallett Johnson—was at the other end. The Colonel spoke to him and then turned the receiver over to me.

I had a good deal of difficulty making Johnson understand

or believe what had happened to me, for which he could scarcely be blamed—the affair did seem improbable. The Colonel was more successful. After a lengthy conversation, it appeared that Johnson gave his word to be responsible for me until such time as my trial by court-martial should come on. The Colonel put the telephone back and turned to me, politer than ever.

"On the American Embassy's undertaking to produce you," he said, "you can go free; but you are not to leave Madrid. I advise you to go straight to the Embassy and tell the *encargado de negocios* all about it. And remember, whatever you do, wherever you go, the secret police are following you. It is not my duty to tell you this, but hints are apparently no good to you; you have no idea . . . You should be warned. You should be more discreet in your—ah—frequentations. Some of the reports in this *dossier* will not sound very beautiful when they are read out at your court-martial."

"But, Señor Coronel, how can that be? I am not blind. If I had been followed by spies I should certainly have seen them."

The Colonel smiled pityingly (a good fellow, that Colonel) and rang a bell. The soldier who answered vanished and reappeared again almost at once, conducting a small, dingy, embarrassed wisp of a man with his cap in his hand.

"That is the spy who is at present attached to you," the Colonel said.

I gazed in astonishment on the little man.

"At your service, Señor," he said ingratiatingly.

The Colonel rose, stretched his hand across the desk, said good-bye.

"I do not know when your trial will come up, Señor," he said, "but in any case I am the military judge. . . . I advise you to keep in close touch with your Embassy, which has

agreed to be responsible for you. If they had not, it would have been my duty to keep you in prison. *Adios.*"

IV

I went out, dazed, and got into a taxicab. In a few minutes I was at the Embassy in the Castellana, telling Hallett Johnson what had happened. He seemed puzzled, amused, mildly surprised. I think that some of my story seemed to him frankly unbelievable, although he was too polite to say so. I know, for example, that at that time he did not really believe in the existence of the little spy. From the Embassy I returned, somewhat shaken, to the Palace Hotel to think things over.

There, as I entered the grill room downstairs, I saw my little spy prowling forlornly among the hats and coats of the *vestiaire.* I went over to him.

"Since you have to watch me all the time," I said, "you may as well come with me. Come and have lunch. You make me nervous standing there in the door."

The little spy was confused, uncertain; but he did not dare refuse.

"If the Señor wishes—the Señor is very kind—I do not wish to disturb the Señor."

He came along with me. We sat at a table against the wall, and I perceived by the astonished smiles of the waiters that he and his profession were known to them. I ordered the luncheon, after a delay caused by my attempts to translate the French names of dishes into Spanish for the spy's benefit. He ate avidly, with a knife-and-fork technique which caused the waiters to raise their eyebrows. I was burning to ask questions.

"You know my name," I said. "Apparently you know a great deal about me. But I don't know yours."

He stopped eating long enough to fish a card out of his pocket with eager, grubby fingers.

" That is my name, Señor," he said. " And I, too, am an American. I was born under the American flag."

His card was a dirty little printed square which said " Juan-Maria Cardenas." But nothing under heaven ever looked or sounded less American than the good Juan-Maria. I was puzzled.

" Aren't you a Spaniard ? "

" I am a Spaniard now, Señor, but I was born under the American flag. In Cuba, that was—at Cienfuegos. The American troops were in occupation."

He seemed delighted at this circumstance, and repeated it a number of times—" *Yo soy norteamericano también ; soy yanqui, Señor !* "

" Tell me something. How long have you been following me ? "

" Since Irun, Señor."

Since Irun ! Since the frontier. It was inconceivable.

" But how did you manage that ? How did you conceal yourself ? I never knew. . . . And why on earth did you follow me, anyway ? "

" It was easy to conceal myself, Señor. It is my profession. There are a number of us stationed at Irun. When you came through, and they saw that you were a journalist, I was detached to follow you. I came down on the same train, mostly in the corridor. Then here, at the hotel, I stayed in the hall outside your room until you went out; when you went out, I went too."

" Even to the theatres ? Even—ah—to the Calle O'Donnell ? "

" Certainly, Señor. You see, with my card from the police I can take any taxi; I can get a seat in any theatre, and if the

seat I want is already sold, I get it anyway; I am entitled to transportation on the motor-cycles of the ordinary police if I need it."

"When I went to the Calle O'Donnell it was late at night. There were no taxis—nothing at all, except the taxi I was in. How did you follow me there?"

"It was simple, Señor. I clung on behind."

"You might have been killed. I don't think your profession is a very safe one."

"It is not bad work, Señor. Sometimes it is quite agreeable. Now, for example, when you were sick in bed, I had nothing to do for a whole week but sit outside your room and smoke cigarettes—more than a week! Ah, that was a pleasant time."

V

After luncheon I considered the problem of communicating to my superiors in Paris just what had happened. I knew that a telegram to my office would be stopped by the Censura. So, as the best way out of the difficulty, I sent a short and very guarded telegram to the *Tribune* correspondent, to Mr. Wales, at his flat in Paris—paying for it as a personal, full-rate message from the Post Office, which might not be sent to the Censura at all. I had returned from this errand, and was wondering what, if anything, I could do next under the somewhat bizarre conditions, when I received a visit from Ginestal.

In my own troubles I had almost forgotten him. Now he came storming into my room, wild-eyed, agitated, thinner and more feverish than ever. As I pieced his story together out of the wreckage of his language—he talked mixed French and Spanish at a fantastic rate, in a fantastic accent, so that half one's time was taken up with wondering which tongue he favoured at the moment—I saw that what had been a rather

comic episode to me had been a horrible experience for him. He had just then—an hour or so before—been released from prison, after three days of solitary confinement during which he had had nothing to eat but bread and watery soup, nobody to talk to but the great rats who swarmed in the jail. He had been in what sounded like a genuine, old-fashioned dungeon, straight out of *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

The poor fellow was in such a state of agitation that he may have exaggerated a little; but his situation did sound appalling. He had been arrested in the middle of the night " by order of the King "—by that same *lettre de cachet* the military judge had produced for me—and the police had shown him no consideration whatever, for he was a Spanish subject. They had ransacked his house for letters or papers, and frightened his wife, who was pregnant, into fit after fit. On the next day, after they had taken him off to prison, his wife had had a miscarriage. For two days he had not even been examined—had been thrown into a dungeon and left there. Then, when he was examined, he had of course easily convinced the military judge that he knew no English and could not possibly have written the fatal dispatch; whereupon the military judge had asked for my name, obtained it, and sent his men out to arrest me. After my examination, and not until then, Ginestal was released. If I had denied the authorship of the dispatch in question, Ginestal would have been kept in prison for weeks, months, perhaps for the whole length of the Primo dictatorship—or so he seemed to think.

He was divided between anger with me for getting him into such a difficulty and gratitude to me for admitting the truth—that he had had nothing to do with the incriminating telegram except to sign it. I did not think either his anger or his gratitude well founded, but a man in his desperate trouble may be permitted to be illogical. His wife was very

ill and might, he thought, die; he was not at all sure that the court-martial against him would be dropped; he was in deadly terror of the prison and the great rats that had visited him there at night. He spoke again and again of those rats. In his terror he would have liked to escape from Spain, but he knew it to be impossible. His little yellow face looked ancient and sad.

Such it was to be a subject of His Majesty King Alfonso XIII in the days of the dictatorship.

VI

I dined again with my spy that night; but on the following day his attentions began to bore me. As I thought it over, it did not seem probable that any government would wish to subject the representative of a powerful foreign newspaper to such surveillance. Perhaps if I asked the Embassy to intervene, Juan-Maria would be removed to other enterprises; and although, no doubt, a new spy might be appointed to dog my steps, at least I could be happily blind again.

I got into a taxicab and went down to the Embassy. Juan-Maria chugged along behind me on a police motor-cycle. At the Embassy I was brought at once into the Ambassador's room, where Johnson was at the time in charge. He was apparently expecting me and was a little angry.

"What is the meaning of this?" he said. "I have a cablegram from Washington to say you're in danger for your life. Are you in danger for your life?"

"No," said I, "but I'm getting damned bored with this treatment. Wherever I go I'm followed by a spy; my letters are opened and read, and they don't even put them back straight; I can't get a telegram sent out to my office; even my telephone doesn't work until it's been clicked through to some spy's office first."

"You're romancing," said Johnson, still further irritated by my tone. "What makes you think you're followed by spies? Such things don't happen. I think you're getting a little too excited."

By this time we were both, to tell the truth, feeling a bit peckish. Johnson, a charming and intelligent man and a good diplomat, had begun his day badly; he had had a most peremptory cablegram from the Secretary of State, Mr. Hughes, ordering a report on what had happened to me. He considered that he had done his duty by me (as indeed he had); and he was, somehow, inclined to blame me for the tone of the Department's dispatch. I, not having seen the dispatch, could not understand why he had suddenly become so haughty and grand.

"If you don't believe me," I said, angry in my turn, "I'll bring the spy in and show him to you. He's sitting outside at your gate now."

Johnson, startled, still not quite believing, rang a bell and ordered Juan-Maria to be brought in. The Embassy (which was the Duke of Tovar's palace when it was not being an embassy) had a garden and an ironwork gate on the Castellana, where Juan-Maria now stood amiably smoking a cigarette with the soldier on guard. Johnson and I stood glaring silently at each other for a few minutes across the majestic reaches of the ambassadorial carpet; then the doors opened and Juan-Maria was thrust into the space between us. Johnson began to question him sharply. Juan-Maria, a pitiable figure, cringing and embarrassed, answered each question as straightforwardly as possible. The man's great defect for his chosen profession was that he did not know how to lie. Yes, he had followed the Señor from the frontier; he made a report every night; he went everywhere the Señor went; he belonged to the secret police, and was in the special

detachment under the orders of Colonel Rico, head of the Censura.

Johnson walked up and down, getting angrier every minute. By this time he was no longer angry with me, for he saw that I had not been romancing in the matter; he was angry, rather, with the stupidity of the situation and with the necessity it put him under to take immediate steps of some kind. There was also that very sharp telegram from Mr. Hughes, who was not accustomed to cabling his embassies. Johnson sat down at the Ambassador's desk and rang a bell.

"I don't think it's any good going to anybody but Primo about this," he said to me. Then, to a secretary who answered the bell: "Telephone to the Presidencia and say that the American *chargé d'affaires* wishes to speak to the President immediately and will be there in ten minutes if he can be received."

He frowned, considered, and suddenly showed me a decoded copy of the cablegram from Washington. It was indeed a remarkable document. "The Department" had been informed (it did not say by whom) that I had been arrested and court-martialed, and was in danger of being shot; the Embassy was to investigate at once, report fully, and take all necessary steps to protect me. The message was signed by Mr. Hughes. I was as surprised as Johnson had been at the dramatic interpretation a few cablegrams and a few thousand miles had put upon my troubles of the past two days.

"I don't know anything about this," I said. "I only told my Paris office that I was going to be court-martialed and couldn't leave Madrid until the trial; I didn't say I was going to be shot."

"That was put in along the way, I suppose," he said. "Come on, let's go to the Presidencia."

We went out and got into one of the Embassy's cars, with the American flag flying; Juan-Maria, commandeering a police motor-cycle which stood at the door, came pounding along after us. Johnson looked out the back window of the car and was annoyed to see the little spy at our heels. I believe this is what irritated him most in the whole affair—that the Embassy car, with the flag flying, should be followed by a police spy.

VII

At the Presidencia we went up to Primo's floor and waited; Juan-Maria disposed himself, meanwhile, among the other spies and guards downstairs. Primo was in a cabinet meeting; we waited ten minutes. Then Johnson—who, when aroused, was indeed a lion—asked a passing secretary to inform the President that the *encargado de negocios* of the United States was waiting for him.

Out came Primo, bouncing with solicitude, smiling cordially, delighted to see his dear Señor Johnson; and to what did he owe the pleasure? Johnson presented me, and then gave an account of what had happened, ending with Mr. Hughes's request for an explanation.

Primo was dumbfounded. I have never seen a man of great power so beautifully caught in the wrong. At first he tried to say that it was all a mistake, that it could not have happened, that I must have misunderstood, that it was not possible; but I gave him the name of the military judge and told him I had seen the order of arrest signed by the King. Then, abandoning this tack, he said that perhaps a mistake had been made, and that it would be rectified; everything would be all right; he would do everything the Embassy thought necessary; Señor Johnson was to assure his government that everything would be done. Johnson, smiling very

politely,—he was indeed a lion that day,—expressed his thanks, bowed, and said: "But, Your Excellency, in the matter of the spies——?"

Primo raised his eyebrows and gesticulated.

"But how can there be any spies? We don't have spies in Spain! No foreigner is subjected to . . ."

He lost himself in phrases, but Johnson—playing on him the same relentless trick I had just played half an hour before at the Embassy—said with another smile and bow: "The spy is downstairs now, having followed the Embassy car here, Excellency. If you care to send for him——?"

Primo was caught. He had to send for the spy, and in the few minutes before Juan-Maria arrived he played nervously with some papers in his hand, frowned, tried to make conversation. When was Mr. Moore coming back? How was the health of that excellent ambassador, that admirable friend? Johnson reassured him about Mr. Moore; and in came poor Juan-Maria with a guard on either side of him.

It is probable that Juan-Maria had never been in such exalted company before. He scarcely dared to answer the questions addressed to him, poor little devil. His voice came in a feeble, cracked half-whisper; he turned his cap round and round in his hands, and after one quick glance to see that he stood in the presence of the Dictator himself, he never took his eyes off the floor.

Primo was exceedingly angry—angrier, I suspected, at being put in such a ridiculous position than at anything else. He shot his questions at Juan-Maria and received the frightened answers.

"*Estúpido, estúpido!*" he said, half to himself; it was clear that the Señor Coronel Jefe de la Censura would soon receive a piece of his mind. He ordered Juan-Maria off in a voice which nearly caused the little spy to faint. Then he turned

back to Hallett Johnson and myself and tried, not very successfully, to smile. Everything would be done; my correspondence would not be touched again; no spies would be allowed to come near me; I was to be quite tranquil; he would himself look into the matter of the court-martial and let me know when I should be free to leave Madrid; but I was not to worry. And with that, and more compliments and smiles to Johnson, he went back to his cabinet meeting.

VIII

Ginestal's wife recovered; Ginestal himself was not molested again, although it took him years to recover the bail he was forced to deposit on his release from prison. But as for Juan-Maria, whom I had (without intending to do so) exposed to the terrible dangers of presidential attention, I could never quite be sure. I saw him no more. And to questions about him I received answers which may or may not have been true—that he had been sent on other duties; that he was not in Madrid. It is possible that the day on which Primo de Rivera noticed his existence was not a good one for Juan-Maria.

Finally, one day, the ambassador, who had returned to Madrid, told me he had been notified by Primo that the court-martial proceedings against me had been dropped; I was free to leave. The " official error " to which all these events had been due was, quite simply, a belief on the part of the Censura that the author of Telegram No. XX35998 was a Spanish subject. A Spanish subject would have had no recourse; a Spanish subject would have been at the mercy of the precious régime Mr. Moore admired so much. The misdeed to be punished was, in short, not the composition of the offending telegram; it was the far graver crime of being born under the caliphate of Alfonso XIII.

B. TRAVEN

The Donna Maria Mine[1]

"It was about a hundred and fifty years ago," said the old gold prospector Howard, " just about the time of the American Revolution. There was a prosperous Indian living near Huacal, a descendant of the chiefs of the Chiracahuas. He had all the land he wanted and took no part in the raids and murders of the neighbouring tribes. His own tribe was settled on the land there and found more pleasure and profit in cultivating it than in everlastingly scrapping with the Spaniards. This chieftain had only one sorrow in the world : his only son and heir was blind. In earlier days the child would have been killed : but now that he and his tribe had settled down and all the tribes been converted to Christianity, their ideas were more humane. Added to that, the child was strong and shapely and unusually beautiful.

" A wandering monk, who wanted to exploit the liberality of the chief to the last inch, advised the father to make a pilgrimage with the boy and his mother to the miraculous Virgin of Guadalupe, and not to be sparing of his offerings; for the Mother of God was greatly pleased by generosity and well able to appreciate the worth of what was given her.

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[1] Taken from *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* by the courtesy of Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

" The chief left his estate in his uncle's charge and set out on his pilgrimage. He was not allowed to employ horse, donkey or waggon and had to make this long trek of nearly two thousand kilometres on foot with his wife and child. He had to say three hundred Ave Marias in every church he passed by and offer large numbers of candles and silver eyes.

" At last he reached Mexico and after offering up prayers and petitions in the cathedral for several hours he prepared for the last stage of his painful ordeal. It is five kilometres from the cathedral to the miraculous image of Guadalupe. He and his wife with their little boy had to go on their knees for these five kilometres, each of them holding a lighted candle which had to be kept alight in spite of wind and rain. When one candle came to an end, another had to be lighted from it, and as they were consecrated candles they cost more than ordinary ones. It took all night to get there. The boy fell asleep, and even in his sleep he cried for a little piece of maize cake and a drink of water. But they were forbidden to eat or drink. They waited until the child was quieter and then the procession went on. All who met them, Spaniards and Indians, got out of their way and crossed themselves, for they thought the family must be guilty of some unusually discreditable sin if they had to expiate it by such a terrible pilgrimage.

" They were utterly exhausted when they got to the foot of the Cerrito de Tepeyacac, the hill on which in the year 1532 the Mother of God appeared three times to the Quauhtlatohua Indian, Juan Diego, and printed her picture on his ayate, or outer garment. Here they spent three days and nights on their knees, praying and imploring. The chief had promised the Church his cattle and his whole harvest if the Mother of God came to his help. But the miracle did not happen. At last, following the monk's advice, he

promised his land and all he had, if the Virgin gave sight to his son.

" But even now there was no sign of the miracle he awaited and had been so confidently promised. The child was so exhausted with his long fast and the fatigue of the journey that it took all his mother's care to keep him alive.

" The chief, not knowing what more he could do, began to doubt the power of the Mother of God and of the Christian religion in general, and he said that he would now go to the medicine men of his race who had often enough proved to his forefathers that the old Indian gods had power to work miracles. The monk forbade him to speak in so blasphemous a manner, and threatened him that more disaster would fall on his family if he gave utterance to his doubts. And they told him that the fault was his own. The miraculous Virgin knew very well, what no one else might know, that he had done wrong on his journey—passed over a church here; purposely miscounted his Ave Marias there, to be quicker done; eaten when he ought not and on various occasions drunk water in the morning without first kneeling down and praying. The chief was forced to confess that he might now and then have said two hundred and eighty instead of three hundred Ave Marias, because of the difficulty of keeping count. And, said another monk, he had no doubt omitted to confess various sins, when he was confessed in the cathedral; for to all who deserved it the miraculous Mother always granted help in their need. Therefore he had better repeat the pilgrimage in six months.

" Perhaps this was too much for the chief, or else—and this seems more probable—he had lost his faith in the miraculous power of the image. In any case, he returned to Mexico, ate heartily and took his young wife in his arms again, as, in obedience to the task he had been set, he had not

done during the whole journey. Then he made inquiries in the town and was recommended to go to the house of a certain Don Manuel Rodriguez. Don Manuel was a famous Spanish doctor, but avaricious and greedy of power. He examined the boy and told the chief that probably he would be able to give him his sight. What would the Indian pay?

"The chief said he had a farm and many cattle. But that, said Don Manuel, was not money. 'I want money, a lot of money.' The chief then told him that he would make him the richest man in all New Spain if he gave his son his sight. How, asked Don Manuel, could he do that out of his farm? The chief replied that he knew of a rich gold and silver mine, and he would take him to it when his son could see. And they made the terrible contract that Don Manuel should have the right to put out the eyes of his son, if the mine either did not exist or by this time belonged to someone else.

"Don Manuel gave his whole attention to the boy for two whole months, working on at him and performing operations, and neglecting all his other patients, even the Viceroy's private secretary. And after two months the child could see like an eagle. Don Manuel told the chief that the cure was permanent. And so it was.

"The chief was overjoyed and his gratitude knew no bounds. 'Now I will prove, Don Manuel, that I did not lie to you,' he replied when Don Manuel asked about the payment. 'The mine belongs to my family. When the Spaniards came my ancestor covered it up, because we wanted no Spaniards in our country. We hated them and knew that the white men loved gold and silver more than their Son of God. The existence of the mine was betrayed to the Spaniards, and they came and tore out the tongues of my ancestor and his wife to make them say where the mine was. But though his mouth was full of blood and he was nearly

frantic with agony, my ancestor laughed in their faces and they never got hold of the mine. And my ancestor wrote the words down, and after his death they went by word of mouth from father to son, until they came to me, and these are the words: "If some great service is done to you or your family or your race, greater than the feather-crowned god of our people or the blood-crowned god of the white people was able or willing to perform, then give the treasure to the man who performs it and let it be his." You, Don Manuel, have, in the person of my son, done to me, my family and my race that service which the god of the white people was too weak to do, in spite of all my pains and prayers and offerings, and therefore the mine is yours. Follow after me, on the road I will tell you, in three months' time, and speak to no one of what you know, and I will make you the richest man in all New Spain.'

"The Indians," Howard said, continuing his tale, "don't know of many more mines than we do. At one time they knew the exact position of all the hidden mines of which, after the conquest of Mexico, the Indians obliterated every trace in revenge for the cruelties inflicted on them. But the Indians have not been stationary since the days of the conquest. Thousands of them were carried into other districts by the Spaniards as workpeople and slaves; others in the course of rebellions and wars were driven from their homes into the hills and the jungle; others perished of the poxes and epidemics which the white men introduced into their country in the cause of civilisation; the families of chiefs died out or were murdered before they could hand on their knowledge to those who followed them. Hence it is very seldom now that an Indian knows of a buried mine. Sometimes he thinks he knows of one, but what is known in his family about this mine or the other has become so legendary, so mixed up with

mines already discovered and known, that the actual site can never be identified, all the more as the site is described by words and landmarks and directions which in the course of time have lost their original meaning and are bound to put you on a false track. This story I am telling you goes back to a time when the traditional memory of the Indians was fresher and less influenced by the trade and commerce brought by the railways. These have caused the Indians to move about much more freely. They leave their homes and go wherever there are better opportunities of making their living.

" As soon as Don Manuel had wound up his affairs in Mexico, he and his wife Maria made the long and difficult journey to Huacal. He found the chief and was welcomed by him like a brother. ' It occurred to me on the journey,' Don Manuel said to his host, ' that it's a very strange thing you didn't work the mine yourself, Aguila. You could have given me a hundred thousand gold gulden, and for that I'd have done whatever you asked.'

" The chief laughed.

" ' I want no gold and I want no silver. I have enough to eat, I have a good and beautiful wife and a son whom I love and who is strong and well formed. What is gold to me? The earth brings a blessing; the fruits of it and my herds of cattle bring blessings. Gold brings no blessing and silver brings no blessing. Does it bring a blessing to you white Spaniards? You murder each other for gold. You hate each other for gold. You spoil the beauty of your lives for gold. We have never made gold our master, we were never its slaves. We said: Gold is beautiful. And so we made rings of it and other adornments, and we adorned ourselves and our wives and our gods with it, because it has beauty. But we did not make it into money. We could look at it and rejoice in it, but we could not eat it. Our people and also

the peoples of the valleys have never fought or made wars for gold. But we have fought much for land and fields and rivers and lakes and towns and salt and herds. But for gold? Or silver? They are only good to look at. I can't put them into my belly when I am hungry, and so they have no value. They are only beautiful like a flower that blooms, or a bird that sings. But if you put the flower in your belly, it is no longer beautiful, and if you cook the bird it sings no longer.'

" Don Manuel laughed.

" ' I shan't put the gold in my belly, Aguila. Trust me for that.'

" The chief laughed too.

" ' I believe you. I can work for the earth, but I cannot work for gold, because then I should have nothing to eat, no tortillas and no camotes. You don't understand what I say, and I don't understand what you say. You have another heart. But all the same I am your friend.'

" For three days they searched about in the mountains and the bush, scratching about and digging. Don Manuel was inclined to be suspicious of this long search and to believe that the Indian had cheated him of his reward. But then again, when he saw how cleverly and methodically the chief examined the neighbourhood, how accurately he noted the position of the sun and also the shadows which were thrown by the mountain tops, he was forced to recognise that he was not taking his course at random. ' It is not as simple as you thought,' said the chief. ' There have been earthquakes, and a few hundred years of rainy seasons and cloudbursts and landslides; rivers have changed their beds, streams have vanished and new ones risen. Little trees have grown into big ones, and big ones which were landmarks have died. It may take a week longer, Don Manuel, you must have patience.'

"It took longer than a week before the chief said one evening: 'I can give you the mine to-morrow; for to-morrow I have it under my eyes.'

"Don Manuel wanted to know why he should not have gone straight home with the chief when he left Mexico.

"'We should still have had to wait till to-morrow, because the sun was not in the right line. Now it is right. I have known for some days where the place is, but to-morrow I shall have the mine and I can give it you.'

"Sure enough, on the next day they found the mine in a gully. 'There has been a bit broken off from the mountain here, as you can see. That is why it was so hard to find the place. There is the mine and it is yours. But now you must leave my house.'

"'Why? I would leave it in any case, because I shall build myself a home near the mine.'

"'Yes, my home is no more good to you. You have the rich mine and you bring no blessing.'

"The chief held out his hand, but Don Manuel said: 'Wait, Aguila, I want to ask you one more question. If I had asked you for a hundred thousand gold gulden to heal your son, would you not have opened up the mine?'

"'Certainly I would have done so. But as soon as I had got the sum you asked I should have buried it again because gold is not good. For what could I have done? The Spaniards would have heard of it and murdered me and my wife and my son to get possession of it. According to your customs, murder is always committed for gold. So be careful, Don Manuel, that you are not murdered, when your people know that you have a mine. When they know that you have nothing but bread and tortillas, you are never murdered. I shall always remain your friend, but now we must part.'

"Don Manuel began at once to make a camp there, and

Aguila returned to his home, which was a day's journey away. Before he set out Don Manuel had procured the Certificados from the government which entitled him to search for precious metals and gave him mining rights over the places where he found them. He had left his wife in the last town they had passed through and he went back there to fetch her, and also engaged workmen and bought the necessary machinery and tools and explosives for blasting. And now he got to work opening up the mine. It exceeded his wildest hopes. It was so rich in silver that it surpassed all mines of which there was any knowledge. Its chief product was silver, but there was gold too, as a by-product.

" He knew enough of what went on to know that a man should never say too much about his mine, or put too high a value on it. Not only ordinary persons but even officials of the Crown and the highest dignitaries of the Church were very ready to cheat a man of his mine if he had not enough power behind him to defend his possession. The owner suddenly vanished and no one knew where he had gone, and the mine, having no owner, came into the hands of the Crown or the Church. The Inquisition, which kept its unholy power much longer in Mexico than anywhere else on earth and only disappeared at last when the Revolution triumphed and the country became a free and independent republic, was then in full and untrammelled vigour. It was enough for a bishop to hear of a wealthy mine for the discoverer and possessor of that mine to be dragged before the Inquisition on a charge of blasphemy, heresy, sorcery, or lack of reverence for the miraculous powers of an image.

" Don Manuel had been made wise by the experiences which had so frequently befallen others. He sent away no silver or gold. He hoarded it up and bided his time. In spite of the rich yield of the mine, he treated his Indian work-

men as shabbily as possible, paid them wages on which they could scarcely live and made them work till they dropped or died; if they did not work hard enough, he encouraged them with the lash. With niggers this method may answer for a long time, but not with Indians. During the three hundred years of Spanish rule in Mexico, the Spaniards never at any time had undisputed possession of the whole country. There was always rebellion somewhere. And if in one place it was stamped out with inhuman brutality, it blazed out somewhere else. If it was so in large, so it was in little; and one day there was a mutiny at Don Manuel's mine. His wife, Donna Maria, was able to fly in time, but he was killed. His treasure was not plundered. As soon as Don Manuel was dead, the Indian workers left the place and went back to their villages.

" When Donna Maria heard that the mine was safe again, she went back to it to carry on. She found all the treasure safe and undisturbed where it had been buried; and what she already possessed would have been enough to keep her in comfort for the rest of her days.

" But she had got it into her head to return to Spain, and to figure there as the richest woman in the land. As she was still young, and beautiful besides, she cherished the ambition of buying a castle and a nobleman's estate and appearing at court as the wife of a marquis. Grandees of Spain had married the daughters of Aztec, Tezcuc and other Indian princes of Mexico and Peru solely for their wealth. Why should not she, who came of a good Spanish family, get a marquis for her husband much more easily than they with the assistance of her boundless fortune?

" She was even better at figures than her deceased husband. She reckoned up how much a castle and a princely estate would cost in Spain, how much it would cost to keep up and the cost of servants, carriages, horses and travelling; how

much the marquis would need and how much she would need herself day by day in order to make a brilliant appearance at court. But still she found that there was much she had not thought of. There would be disbursements to the government, and a church to build, in order to put the lofty personages of the Inquisition in good humour and stay their avarice. And then she still carried on until the sum total she had reckoned could be doubled, and thus insured herself against any possible error in her calculations. They were hard years she had to battle through. She was far from civilisation and deprived of even the barest comforts; she was on the alert night and day, keeping a vigilant eye on the workmen to see that their wages were not too high, and on the other hand not so low that they gave out and mutinied. She had to think, too, of raids and the armed bands of criminals and deserters and escaped convicts and the dregs of the towns, which went about marauding and spreading terror among Indian and white people alike.

"Even envy itself could not grudge Donna Maria the credit of being a better match for her formidable task than her deceased husband had been. She feared neither death nor the devil, neither marauding bandits nor mutinous Indians, and she would assuredly have been a match in one way or another for the Inquisition itself, if she had been summoned before it. She was robust, indefatigable and energetic; but if she met with a check, she fell back on her gift for diplomacy and triumphed all the more certainly. She could laugh when it suited her book; she could weep if that seemed more profitable; she could curse like a footpad and she could pray more devoutly than a Franciscan monk. She could do the work of six Indians, and when things did not go as she wished she went at it with her own hands, and the Indians, who were not used to seeing a woman do heavy labour as if it were

child's play, were so dazed with astonishment that they had to do whatever Donna Maria required of them. So it went on for years. But at last she felt such a longing for Spain, for a clean house, for a good kitchen, a soft bed and a husband to fondle and caress that one day she decided to pack up and go. When she surveyed her hoard she found that it was enough for even the most fantastic luxury.

" She had got together an armed guard which watched over and defended the mine and her treasure. It consisted of Indians and a few Mestizos and two Spanish soldiers who had either deserted or been dismissed. One of the two Spaniards took command by day, and the other by night.

" The metal, of which about one-sixth was gold and all the rest pure silver, she had run off into rough bars and ingots, so that it would be easier to transport. These bars were securely packed in boxes. How great the riches were which she had got from the mine may be judged from the fact that sixty mules, each one laden to the limit of its strength, were required for the transport of her treasure.

" The caravan with its escort of twenty armed men set off on the journey of two thousand kilometres to the capital city of Mexico. There was no proper road and their way led over deserts and steep mountains, through rivers and gullies and defiles, through primeval bush and forest and stretches of jungle; now in the ice-cold winds of the sierra and high snow-covered plateaux, then again in the blazing heat of belts of fever-haunted jungle.

" And then one evening after they had camped for the night it seemed to her that something unusual was going on. She went to see and found that one of the Spaniards had made an attempt to arrange matters to suit himself. He came up to her and asked : ' Will you, or will you not marry me, Donna Maria ? '

" ' I marry you, a common thief who only escaped hanging because the hangman used a bit of rotten rope instead of a good new one ? '

" Whereupon the fellow replied : ' I'm quite ready to take it without you. I'll find a prettier girl than you.'

" ' What will you take without me ? '

" ' What's in the boxes.'

" ' Not as long as I'm here, you bastard.'

" The man pointed across to where the men were encamped and said with a grin :

" ' If you take a look over there you may change your mind. I can wait an hour.'

" ' You can wait your whole life or until you're hanged.'

" However, she went across to the men and found that the fellow had done a fine bit of business for himself. The other Spaniard and the Indians were bound, and the Mestizos had joined the mutiny, hoping to go shares. There they stood with pistols in their belts and looked at her with impudent grins on their faces.

" ' Very fine,' Donna Maria remarked to the fellow.

" ' That's so,' he replied. ' And now perhaps you'll make up your mind and say yes nicely.'

" ' You're right that I'll make up my mind, you hound,' she said, and at the same moment she seized hold of a whip lying with the saddles on the ground, and before the man saw what she was up to she blinded him with a merciless cut across the face. He staggered and like lightning she followed it up with half a dozen more. He fell in a faint and lay motionless. But she had only begun. The Mestizos were so astonished that it did not enter their heads either to make off or to shoot. And as soon as they realised what had happened to their leader the whip was already being slashed across their faces.

Some fell, others began to run, putting up their arms to shield their faces. Donna Maria sprang to the other Spaniard and cut his cords with a few rapid jerks. He at once released the Indians, and in a moment they had jumped on to their horses and lassoed the Mestizos.

" ' Hang the bastard,' Donna Maria called out, pointing to the Spaniard who had designed to marry her and now got heavily to his feet. Half a minute later he was hanging.

" ' What did I tell you ? ' she called out to him as the Indians hoisted him up. ' I told you you'd hang first. And as for you,' she turned to the Mestizos, ' I ought to hang you too. But I'll let you off. You all have the hangman's noose round your necks, and I don't want to spoil his trade. But I warn you that if you try it on again I shall flog you myself until the flesh hangs in strips from your carcases, then I shall roast you and then hang you. There is no need for you to stay, you can go if you like. You will get no wages and you will give up your arms. But if you choose to stay on, I will give you your pistols, your saddles and the horses you are riding on when we get to Mexico. Listen, you—what is your name ? ' she went up to the Spaniard who had taken her part. ' Rügo, yes. When we get to Mexico, you shall have ' —she was about to say a mule and its load, but she checked herself in time—' you shall have the right hand load of that mule there, and the Indians half of the left hand one between them.' With this the mutiny was at an end.

" But there were still the marauding bands against whom the caravan had to be defended at all costs. These bands cared nothing for life or death. They fought to the last, for they had everything to gain; and the lives they staked they had already forfeited as criminals long ago. Not once but many times over.

" Then one animal fell with its load into a cleft and its load

had to be salvaged. Another sank in a bog with all its treasure. A third disappeared while fording a river.

"It was a question whether it was easier to get the metal out of the mine or to transport it in safety to Mexico without Donna Maria's laying down her life in the attempt.

"The journey was a gruelling experience for her, and when she looked back to the long hard years at the mine, could she say they had been any better? She had never had a moment's joy since the mine came into her possession; and she could not recall a single hour when she had felt quite sure of her life or her treasure. In fact, taking it day by day and reckoning up all she had been through, her life had been wretched beyond words, more wretched than the life of a beast. Fear and anxiety had never left her. Dread pursued her into her dreams and there was no respite from the tormenting thoughts which harried her all day. There was one, and only one, ray of light in the misery of her dreary existence —the thought of the moment when she handed over her treasure to the safe keeping of His Majesty's Government in Mexico. This moment, the moment for which she had lived such a pitiful life for years past, came. She reached Mexico City without having lost so much as one bar of her precious load. She was received by the Viceroy in person, and he paid her the high honour of a private audience and talked to her for a long time. Her joy and gratitude exceeded all bounds when the mighty personage said that the fortune she had won at the cost of such arduous toil and severe privations should be received into the vaults which were exclusively reserved for the royal treasure.

"This was more than Donna Maria had ever dared to hope. Nowhere in all the Spanish dominions, not in the crypt of the Cathedral or in a monastery, could her treasure be so safely lodged, and from nowhere else could it be so certainly

recovered. It was in the vaults of the government itself, and the Viceroy, the greatest power in the land, was personally answerable for its safety. Here her treasure was lodged in security at last, until she could convey it under military escort to a ship and carry it with her to the land of her longings. For his forethought and the gracious condescension he had shown her, she begged the Viceroy to accept a share which was large enough to seem a princely one even to a Viceroy of the Spanish dominions.

"Next she paid her men off and discharged them; and then retired to her Inn, the best in the town.

"And now at last after so many years she could lie down without a care and sleep. For the first time for years she could draw her breath in peace, eat in peace and allow her thoughts to wander. At last she could dismiss the cares which had ceaselessly revolved all these years in her brain, and welcome other and more delightful ones.

"But then something happened, something she had never expected. Her treasure did not disappear. It was not stolen from the vaults under cover of night and mist. Something else disappeared. Donna Maria lay down to sleep, safe in a beautiful white bed; but no one ever saw her get up. No one has ever seen Donna Maria again. Nothing has ever been heard of her. She vanished and not a soul knew where she had gone."

FRANCIS STUART

Relativity

"Were you in France?" the major asked a small thin man who had been sitting for the last hour or so in a corner of the saloon-bar.

"I have been in Paris," the insignificant-looking little fellow answered. He appeared embarrassed at being addressed.

"No, no. I mean were you at the front?"

"Oh yes."

"What regiment?" the major rapped out. He was tall and thick, and wore a heavy light-grey overcoat; his head was bare, his hair clipped short, and he had the brownish skin of the outdoor man or the habitual beer-drinker.

The other wore a thin raincoat, somewhat stained, and an old green hat pulled down over his eyes. His thin face was pale. There was an evening paper spread on the table in front of him. The paper was wet with spilt beer that had soaked through it.

"As a matter of fact I was attached to G.H.Q.," he answered, in an almost apologetic tone. He had a peculiar womanish voice and spoke with a slight drawl.

"What?" the major rapped out.

" As a matter of fact," the other repeated patiently, word for word, " I was attached to G.H.Q." He then lowered his eyes to the paper in front of him.

The major eyed him for some moments with an expression that it would be difficult to describe. As one might look at a dog, perhaps, that had strayed into one's house and, having misbehaved itself, started to growl when one wished to examine the address on its collar.

At that moment, however, the bar was empty except for the two of them, and the major was forced either to go on talking to this suspicious-looking fellow or remain silent. And to remain silent was very much against the grain. He had an appointment here at eight o'clock. It was now three minutes to eight. He was sorry he had pitched on this dismal spot, but he had understood it was becoming fashionable, and he liked to be a pioneer in such matters. He liked to be just ahead of the crowd. Not too far ahead, however.

" Well, have a drink," he said.

" Thanks so much," the other answered in his slow, irritatingly high-pitched voice.

" A regular nancy," the major said to himself disgustedly. " G.H.Q. indeed ! A pretty pass things are coming to."

When the drinks were brought he raised his glass.

" Well, to those days ! " he said in a loud voice. " In the line or back of it." He had himself served with the Guards. He thought this information would be quite wasted on the other. After a moment, and in spite of this feeling, he added :

" My name's Fox-Bellamy, late of the Guards."

" Oh, really ? As a matter of fact, my name's Arthur Tennant," the other said in his apologetic drawl.

" Just like the fellow to drag in his Christian name. Damned effeminate," the major thought. He began to talk

about the war. He had a way of intimating to his audience, without actually boasting, that wherever the fighting had been hottest there he had been in the forefront. But it was not only about the war that he gave this impression. He was always in the right place at the right moment, saying or doing the right thing, and making everyone else less gifted in this respect look more or less of a fool. A man of the world, a man about town, equally at home in the saddle, in the butt, in the drawing-room, on ice, on the dance-floor, at the tiller, at dinner, in bed, and heaven knows where not. In a word : a success. The other, whose name was Arthur Tennant, struck one as always being slightly ludicrous in any place or circumstance, a little embarrassed, apologetic, diffident.

At the same moment two girls came into the bar. One was rather small, with fair metallically-coloured hair, overpainted expressionless lips and very bright eyes, all surface. She ran over to the major, who appeared delighted to see her and exclaimed :

" Hello, sweetheart ! This place doesn't seem much fun. We'll have one drink and then clear off for a spot of dinner."

" It looks lousy," the girl said, looking round the empty room.

The other girl was tall with a pale face and fair hair with almost a pinkish tinge in it. She had a long mouth, and there were slight hollows in her cheeks. She had grey eyes with little shadows under them. She strolled across to where Arthur Tennant was sitting reading the evening paper.

" Hello, darling," she said, sitting down. " It's nice here, so empty." She had the same slow way of speaking, but her voice was deep.

When the man raised his head to look at her and smiled, he looked different from the way he had when he had been listening to the major. His face altered in some subtle way,

but the major was not now looking at him, being occupied with his cutie, and it is doubtful if he would have noticed this in any case. The major's voice still filled the room.

"And before we know where we are we'll be a third-rate Power, effete, worn-out, decadent."

In their corner Arthur Tennant and the tall girl were talking in low tones. Not only his face, but his voice seemed to have altered too. It had the same slowness, but no longer the high-pitched drawl that had so irritated the major. Had he heard, like the major, that this tavern was becoming one of the fashionable haunts, he would not have met the girl here to-night. He had picked this place just because it always seemed empty. They always looked for places like this where they could meet without the danger of being seen together.

The major, between his remarks to the vivid-looking girl, took a glance at them out of the corner of his eye. He sized up the other girl quickly. He was pretty good, he thought, at 'sizing up' women. "A perverse creature," he said to himself, but he was somewhat puzzled by the expensive fur coat she was wearing. He had already come to the conclusion that Tennant was quite penniless, a loafer, possibly even a trickster of some sort. "Living on her, I dare say," he commented to himself.

"Things have come to a pretty pass," he repeated aloud. "Well," he went on, "let's get out of this, sweetie." He was already beginning to feel almost contaminated by the degenerate atmosphere of the place.

"Where's your car?" the girl asked, "I didn't see it outside as I came in."

"It's right in front," the major said.

"No, it isn't. I'd have seen it."

The major rushed to the door and went out. In a moment

he came in again, banging the door with his shoulder so that it swung violently.

"Damnation!" he roared. "My car's been stolen. I left it out there and it's gone. Where's the telephone?" he added to the barman, not waiting for an answer, but lifting the counter-flap and making for a door behind it. The man had wonderful initiative. He never stood about in an emergency. He always did something. This time, however, he had started off in the wrong direction. The barman pointed out the telephone-box at the other end of the room.

Even when the major was inside the box his voice could be heard roaring into the receiver. There appeared to be something wrong. He was not the kind of fellow to remain quietly in a telephone-box if he could not make the thing work.

"The damned machine's out of order," he shouted, opening the glass door. The barman came over and went into the box. There was not much room, as the major stayed in too. He was not going to step out and let the barman fool around with it. One had to be on the spot, keep one's eyes open, by God.

"The wire's been cut," the barman said in a couple of moments.

"What's that?" the major said, momentarily at a loss.

The barman, however, did not think it necessary to repeat his remark. He went outside, and when he came back he said: "It's been cut on the outside wall. Whoever stole your car did that to help them get away."

The major had already taken a few strides towards the couple in the corner. But he had stopped half-way across. They had taken no notice of the affair at all, but had gone on talking in low tones.

"Listen, Carole," Arthur Tennant was saying, "it can't

go on like this, meeting in these places, always with an eye on the clock, and afraid of who's going to come in."

"How many times have you said that?" she answered in her slow voice that turned each word into a sigh, but smiling too with a slight lengthening of her long mouth. "And yet we go on, we go on, we go on," she repeated, "like all the other secret lovers all over the world."

"But we're not like the others."

"No. I wish we were."

"O God, I wish we were."

"If only we were like that man and girl who have to worry because their car's been taken," she said. "If only things were simple like that. Wouldn't we laugh, darling, if all that was wrong was that our car had been taken?"

The barman had gone through into the public bar. There was only one customer there, a man of forty-five or so, whose skin had a dry, withered look, as though it belonged to a corpse. The barman was talking to him. His manner seemed to have undergone a change since he had left the saloon-bar. He was leaning despondently on the counter, and kept passing his hand across his forehead.

"That's the end," he said. "The inspector was in again the other day. If there was another car stolen from here they'd bring me in, he said. And even if they couldn't prove anything against me they'd get the licence revoked and shut down the place. And there's Margaret upstairs in bed with a baby two days old, and every penny we had we put in here. We starved ourselves the last year, hanging on waiting for things to pick up. They were just beginning to pick up. We were beginning to get some of the smart crowd in. And now I may go up to my girl and tell her they'll be here for me to-night and they'll shut down the place. I can't tell her. Things were looking so good, too.

Do you know who's in there to-night? General Tennant and Carole Lester the film star. It's the third night running they've been in. People like that bring others. There they are, both rotten with money, and to look at them you'd think there was nothing left for them but the gas. Just because the fellow's got a wife, I suppose. My God," the barman ended, " if that was all was wrong with me I wouldn't worry."

The customer in the public bar listened with a peculiar smile on his drawn face. He invited the barman to have a drink with him, but he was not at all sorry for him. What he was thinking was :

" The damned fool doesn't know how lucky he is. There he is young and strong and a sweet young girl for his wife and all life before him. My God, that's heaven. If I had all that, I'd be singing. What would I care whether they closed down the place? To hell with them; to hell with everyone, if I had all life in front of me, if I wasn't going to die, going to die, going to die, in a few months, of this terrible disease."

When he had finished his drink he said good-night to the barman and started home the two miles along the country road. He had to walk slowly, or he got out of breath. There was a sharp corner about a mile along the road, and when he came to it he saw a solid black shadow where the moonlight shone softly into the ditch. Here and there the shadow sparkled as the moonlight was reflected in flashes from the broken glass. He went over and examined the smashed car. Lying across what was left of the front-seat, with his body in a tortured, broken position, there was a man. The moonlight shone palely on his dead face. He had been a notorious car-thief. His body looked frail and pitiful amid the twisted metal and shattered glass. The sick man stood

looking down at him for some moments. Suddenly, almost without meaning to, he raised his arm and took off his hat.

"Poor devil," he whispered.

He was moved to pity. He was surprised to find his hat in his hand. What had he taken it off for? He could not have explained, but in a vague way he knew that he had bowed down, as it were, before this manifestation of the tragic. A dead crook. A sordid business. But it was not the sordidness that struck him. Only the sense of the utter failure of life ended on that note. So he had taken off his hat unconsciously in the soft moonlight, the tragic bowing down before the tragic. And at that moment he forgot his own tragedy. It paled in the soft moonlight before that dead pale face. He shuffled off towards home. He would telephone when he got home.

"Poor devil," he repeated.

He could not think about himself any more. Why, there was plenty of time to think about himself anyhow. He had another two months at least. He even tried to straighten himself a little and swing his arms as he walked. Back down the road he could hear the major's loud voice. He had seen the overturned car and was hurrying towards it. He heard the shrill voice of the girl with him too. He heard the major tell the girl to wait. Then he heard him shout back to her.

"It's wrecked, finished. The damned fellow's broken his blasted neck. That's the only consolation. There's nothing for it but to hoof it to the nearest telephone. Back you go to the pub, darling. I'll see to everything. Someone's going to pay for this. I'm not going to take it lying down. A pretty pass things are coming to," he said.

MARGARET IRWIN

Amiable Confessions[1]

II. *The First Story*

We were walking through a wood in South Cornwall. The trees were short and twisted by the wind, the ground beneath them bare except for thousands of rustling bluebell pods. Someone said what a marvellous place this must be in spring, when the bluebells were out. Here were only their ghosts, armies of them, white and whispering beneath the trees of high summer. Through the curling, stunted branches we saw blue water. It was the sea, running up very far inland in one of those many long creeks that cut up the south of Cornwall into remote peninsulas, difficult to reach by road. The trees stopped short on the edge of rocks that were slippery with seaweed, black, and full of sudden chasms. Those trees that had ventured too near had got their branches caught by the sea; now at low tide they dripped dolorously over the rocks, their leaves rotted and withered, their twigs dangling alien growths of slimy black weed. That was no holy place, I thought, and believed

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[1] "*Amiable Confessions*" *are the biographical accounts by prominent authors of their first essays at writing. Helen Simpson contributed the first article to the October issue of* L.D.M.

their companions to be retreating from them in horror, so abruptly did the wood stop at the edge of the rocks.

"You see," said someone, "the bluebells come right down to the sea. At high tide you could see them from a boat, with their blue running almost into the blue of the water."

I knew that I should see them so, that I should sail up these creeks in a fishing smack when the bluebells were out. Three years later I did this, as I had known I should, for to want a thing as much as that is to do it, and I was very soon to have this proved to me.

As we sat under the trees, looking at the water through their branches and their dreadful festoons of dank seaweed, we saw a man come out of a white cottage on the other side of the creek, and down to a boat on that further shore, and row across to our side. A group of white ducks that had been swimming about near the boat now followed him in a long line, one behind the other. As he rowed he called, "Bill, Bill, Bill," and they all answered him, "Quack, quack, quack." When he came near our shore, we saw that he had only one eye. He called up to us, asking if we wanted to be rowed across, but we did not, and he landed and disappeared through the woods, while his ducks paddled round his now stationary boat, waiting for his return.

I said, "Why has no one ever written a story about a one-eyed ferryman, and his ducks following him whenever he rows across the creek?"

It seemed an unnatural omission. I could not believe that no one had ever written the story, since I wanted so much to read it. One of the three friends with me (her name was Valentine Hawtrey) said, "Why don't you write it yourself?"

It was all very well for her to talk. She was a Writer.

She had had books published, long books that must have taken ages to write out, word by word, quite apart from making them all up. Some of them were learned books too; she knew exactly how people lived and dressed in the fourteenth century, the sort of things that one could never find out oneself. I said all this, and she replied, "I hadn't always written books."

Well, that was possible, though not very easy to believe, and anyone could see that she *could* write books, and that I could not. I had never made up a whole story in my head, not even in my childhood, when I used to walk round and round a ramshackle old garden, making up people and scenes and adventures that lasted on and on. They were never stories that had a beginning, middle and end, such as my literary uncle said that every story or essay should have. How should I end them, when by doing so I should cut off my own line of retreat into a world as vivid and as necessary as that of my actual life? But that had been when I was a child. Now, that time in Cornwall, I was nineteen, and still I could not "make up" a story.

"Don't wait to make it up first. Just begin and try," said the voice of the temptress.

But I did not know where it began. Ducks paddled round an empty boat, then followed a one-eyed ferryman across the creek. Green branches dripped with deadly sea-weed, and someone sat behind them, watching the ducks, and refused to go across in the ferryman's boat. That was part of the story, but that was not where it began.

The village of Saint Just in Roseland on a Sunday evening was also part of it. All that part of the country was called Roseland. Some said the name came from an old Cornish word, converted, like Saint Elizabeth's loaves, into roses; others, that Queen Elizabeth had so christened

it on account of the great white July roses with their golden centres that clustered all over the hedges and stared down at us as we passed.

Roseland was full of saints, many of whom had crossed from Ireland on a millstone or a cabbage leaf. We were staying at Saint Mawes. Opposite, across the bay, was Saint Anthony, who must, I imagined, have lived in that long dark enchanter's palace, rising into turrets and cupolas, which hung like a cloud over the edge of the sea. Saint Just had modestly retired inland, so modestly that we only came on his remote village by chance, and even then his church remained secret.

The village was the neatest and prettiest I have seen, a village in a picture book, given possibly to Queen Victoria in her childhood on her promise to be good. The white cottages stood in a row like children in their Sunday pinafores; each had a patch of bright garden in front of it, and flowers grew in every window in front of the white muslin blinds. All the windows were shut, the doors were shut, there was nobody about, not even a cat curled up in the sunny doorways, not even a dog to bark behind them. There was nobody in the village. Then we heard the sleepy, muffled sound of a bell. That was what had happened. The villagers were all at church. But where? One could see no church. The village stood on top of a hill, the bell came from below, from the depths of a wood; and then we saw the point of a steeple peering out among the tall trees. There was a stile and a little field-path that led down into the wood, and there was a tiny churchyard hidden among the trees, and a church so near the edge of a creek that the sea at the spring tides could just reach its walls. We went into the church, and an old man in a surplice and a very long white beard was ringing the bell himself. Then he read the

Evening Service and preached the sermon, in a wandering, echoing voice like the rumblings in some deep, oceanic cave. I can remember one sentence of his sermon, " It is not right to envy," he said; and the words wandered away into the corners of the church, behind the pillars, and out through the open door, where they mingled with the sound of the little waves lapping on the rocks.

That Sunday evening must come into the story of the one-eyed ferryman and his ducks. So much I knew as I walked away home from them, kicking the sunbaked ruts in the road into powdery white dust. But the story did not begin up in that empty village. Someone would have to come along that road and see those cottages standing there in the evening sunlight, all bright and silent—just as someone would have to come down through the wood and peer through the branches at the ferryman rowing across the creek. I looked up at a high white wall where scarlet geranium sprawled over the top, and I knew at once that the story began on that wall. I started humming,

A boy called Paul
Once sat on a wall
He waited and watched
For nothing at all.

So there was my hero's name, just because it rhymed with wall. And when I got in, I began with him up there on the wall, looking down into the road, not knowing at all how I should get him down from it and into the road, and so start him on his adventures. But once he was there he took control, and by next day I had the story I wanted, a short fairy-tale, which was published later in " Little Folks."

I did some more fairy-tales. They were easy, they made themselves up as they went along, one did not have to know anything in them, nor to observe any laws of probability.

Not for some time did I attempt anything else, and then only by dint of telling myself that it would not be a real novel, it need only be a long story. Imaginary scenes or people stuck in one's head until one had to write about them—and it was the same later when I took to writing about history. People one had read about since childhood in a vague, desultory way, grew more and more dominating. One knew, not only that they had done this or that, but saw, or thought one saw, why they had done it. Here was a story that had become so personal and intimate that one had to write it. Fairy-tale, novel, history—I had never said to myself that I would do any of these things, but I wanted each particular instance of them done so much that I had to do it.

Winifred Holtby will contribute Number 3 of "Amiable Confessions." Her article will appear in the December number.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

A Pretty Fellow

He was a very pretty boy, that was undeniable, and his name was Cyril Hannet. I put him down at eighteen and far too young for his age. He was with his parents—the mother a thin, anxious, and slightly querulous woman somewhere in her forties; the father older, well over fifty, I thought, grey-haired, grey-moustached, rather pompous and asinine, probably a good business man of the severely conservative sort. The boy, I was sure from the beginning, was an only child. You could tell by the way his mother treated him—the worried solicitude of a mother-hen—and by the way he treated her—with a quiet, slightly impatient disregard. Yes, he was an only child; had been delicate; they had taken him away from school, I felt sure, and had a private tutor for him. And now, no doubt, the family doctor had recommended Switzerland: that was why they were at this Swiss hotel five thousand feet up in the air in mid-August. Not, of course, that there was really anything more the matter with him than his mother's ardent interest in disease. He was backward, obviously; too loose and lanky for eighteen, too girlishly pretty and petulant. But for all that, he was strong and wiry, he would soon fill out into rather a fine young man. And he

was not in the least shy or retiring : on the contrary, he was ready to chatter to everybody. I hadn't been in the hotel three hours before he detected me leaning on the verandah rail looking at the mountains, and strolled over in my direction. Hearing approaching footsteps, I glanced round and met his weakly sweet smile. " Rather grand, aren't they ? " he said, without the smallest hint of enthusiasm in his clear, empty young voice. " You've just turned up, haven't you ? "

" Yes," I said, " I arrived this morning. How long have you been here ? "

" Oh, we've been here some time, about a month." It turned out later that the month was actually ten days. " See that pointed one with a sort of kink in it ? That's the Matterhorn. And the next, to the left . . ."

I let him chatter on. I didn't tell him that he was wrong about the one on the left or that I had known the mountains and the hotel before he was born. I didn't want to let him down. I always have a feeling that young creatures ought to be treated with the most scrupulous consideration until they make absolute nuisances of themselves, and I found young Hannet rather disarming at first. But not for long. I soon discovered that he was a really appalling little gasbag. It would have been all right if his talk had been worth listening to, but it wasn't. He loved to get hold of people and chatter to them—I was going to say, make friends with them, but that was just what he didn't do. There was nothing friendly, nothing cordial, in his sociability : he neither liked nor disliked people; he merely liked talking. His talk was largely about himself, a kind of mechanical bird-song about his habits and possessions; about how he had two motor-bikes at home—you had to have a couple if you went in for it seriously; about how he was very keen on skating—had been, all his life—and he went through some very complicated

figures on the floor of the lounge with—I must confess—a rather disarming and totally unconscious grace, his sole aim obviously to instruct me, to show me how it was done. In fact, his total lack of self-consciousness was his chief merit. He wasn't in the least out to please; he was quite unaware of his good looks, and seemed to expect no admiration except for his two motor-bikes, his complicated figure-skating, and also for the fact that since he had arrived in Switzerland he had done, as he said, some rather stiff climbs. He was terribly keen on climbing, he said. In fact, that was why he had insisted on their coming to Switzerland. Dad and the Mater had wanted to go to Italy, to some lake or other, miles from the Alps. I asked him what climbs he had done. He began by being vaguely boastful, but when I betrayed the fact that I knew most of the climbs in the neighbourhood and began to pin him down to names, it all boiled down to the fact that he had been out twice and done a couple of easy climbs not far from the hotel. He had rigged himself out with ice-axe, rope, and formidable boots, and had, of course, taken a guide. Of all this equipment the ordinary able-bodied youth with no previous experience would have needed only the guide. Yes, he was a young gasbag, and also a very considerable bore, and often when I heard his loud, clear, passionless voice yapping away in the lounge, I would steal away to avoid my turn of his attentions. Even as a mere spectacle he didn't wear well: his prettiness very soon palled; there was something sickly sweet about it, and his lack of warmth and of any real intelligence betrayed itself in a curious blankness in the expression of his blue eyes. The only sign of feeling I ever saw in them was a passing fretfulness, that is until that final day when they blazed at last with a real and profound emotion, abject terror.

My visit to the hotel was to be a brief one. A friend who

had come out to Lausanne on business was to join me in a few days, and then we would set off on foot up the Simplon from Brigue, over the Kaltwasser glacier and Monte Leone to Domodossola, and from there we would strike through the mountains again to Lake Maggiore. The day after my arrival a couple of Cambridge undergraduates turned up. I noticed them first at lunch, where they sat together at the long table and, like all English new arrivals, talked in low tones to one another, studiously turning a cold shoulder to their neighbours. But they did not preserve their immunity for long. As soon as lunch was over and they had settled themselves in chairs on the verandah, I saw young Hannet drift over in their direction and lean for a while over the railing, lost in contemplation of the mountains. One could see by their gestures that the two young men were talking about the mountains, and before long I heard young Hannet's boyish yap. "As a matter of fact that one's the Weisshorn. You've just turned up, haven't you? Done much climbing? I've been doing a good deal, one or two pretty stiff climbs. Of course you've got to be roped for that sort of thing."

The two young men were mistrustful and obviously, extremely obviously, bored by this inroad on their private conversation. They could have been little, if at all, older than the Hannet boy, but the contrast between the lanky, weakly pretty child and the two well-knit, self-aware young men was remarkable. I watched the group with inward amusement: it was like watching two young dogs—friends—suddenly invaded by an irrepressible pup. They wagged their tails stiffly, so to speak, smiled perfunctorily, as if in the hope of choking off, not too drastically, their intruder. But young Hannet remained sublimely unaware of their sentiments. He yapped on until he had satisfied his need for yapping, and then with an airy "Well, see you later!"

strolled off in search of other prey. He paused at my chair, but I had taken care to be deeply involved in a letter which I had fished out of my pocket for the purpose, and, to my relief, I heard him move on. With one eye I glanced at the Cambridge boys. They were making subdued and unappreciative remarks about their new acquaintance. The corners of their mouths turned down intermittently in brief, disdainful smiles.

None the less, the following day the acquaintanceship had ripened, unwillingly as regards the two young men. They dealt with the Hannet boy now with a freer hand, mildly sceptical, mildly taunting, as to a child that wanted keeping in order. When he trotted out his two motor-bikes at home they expressed exaggerated amazement: "Two? Did you say *two* motor-bikes? Do you ride them both at once?" "Why not send for one, to climb the mountains?"

Young Hannet took the chaff quite well. It didn't suppress him in the least; on the contrary, it spurred him to higher flights of bravado. "Well, you can say what you like, but as a matter of fact I'd thought of that. I don't know why you shouldn't get up some of the easier ones on a motor-bike. Nobody's tried. Shouldn't wonder if I did, one of these days."

"Well, be sure and let us know," they said, "and we'll be there to applaud and shovel up the scrap-iron."

The next development was that the two Cambridge boys were going to do a climb with young Hannet. One of them told me of it the evening before.

Had they done any climbing, I asked him.

No, they hadn't.

"You're taking a guide, of course?"

No. Young Hannet was going to take them a climb he'd done already.

"You'd really better take a guide," I said. "I know the climb. As far as climbing goes it's perfectly simple, but there are hidden crevasses, safe enough to cross in the early morning, but risky later in the day when the sun's been on them."

"Hannet says he knows all about them."

"Oh, no doubt," I said. "But, after all, he's an awful young ass."

The boy laughed gleefully. "Yes, isn't he?" he said.

But, for all that, he probably thought me an old fogey, and I didn't gather whether he meant to take my advice or not. Though he didn't think much of young Hannet, he had, no doubt, a perfect confidence in the strength and common sense of himself and his friend.

I had forgotten about the boys and their climb when I went out after lunch next day. I thought I would walk up across the glacier to see if I could get one or two bits of Edelweiss to send to my sister. I crossed a meadow deep in summer flowers and hissing and humming with grasshoppers and bees, and struck into the winding stony track that climbed towards the glacier.

I was hardly a couple of hundred feet above the hotel when I saw a figure sitting on a boulder some yards ahead of me. It was young Hannet. Bother the boy! I wasn't going to stop and listen to his chatter, and I certainly didn't want him as a companion on my climb. But should I ever be able to shake him off? It wasn't till I was about ten yards from him that I remembered it was to-day that he and the Cambridge boys were to do their climb.

"Hallo!" I shouted, "what have you done with your friends?"

I got no reply. When I was almost level with him I looked up and spoke again.

" What have you done with the other fellows ? "

Something in his attitude struck me. He sat there, his long lanky legs sprawling in front of him, his body drooping over them, unspeakably limp and crestfallen. It occurred to me that his friends had given him the slip, and I suddenly felt sorry for the poor bumptious child. But next moment he lifted a white, haggard face and I saw that something was really wrong.

" Hallo ! " I said, " what's the matter ? Are you ill ? "

He stared blankly. " Something . . . It's . . ." Suddenly he collapsed into sobs. His ice-axe lay on the ground beside him. His head drooped over his knees.

A sudden suspicion shot through me. I stood over him. " Oh, come, come ! " I said, as if comforting a child, " tell me what's wrong."

He didn't raise his head. " They're gone," he blubbered.

" Gone ? Where to ? "

" Fallen. . . . Right over."

A cold horror blazed up inside me. I seized him roughly by the shoulder, and he raised wild terrified blue eyes, cowering under my grip. I loosened my hold of him.

" Listen ! " I said as calmly as I could. " You must pull yourself together and tell me what's happened."

He got out his handkerchief and blew his nose.

" Now, come on," I said, " let's hear."

" It was too steep," he whispered.

" Yes ? What was too steep ? "

" The snow. I'd . . . I'd taken them to see the cornice."

" And you let them . . . and they went too near the edge ? "

" No. We'd seen it, and we were climbing away up the slope. I . . . I didn't know it was so steep."

" Go on," I said.

"I felt an awful tug . . ."

"A tug?"

"Yes, on the rope."

"I see. You were roped."

"Yes. I was in front. . . . then . . ."

"Yes, then?"

"Then Benson; and then . . . and then Vine."

"And you felt a tug."

"They'd both slipped. They were struggling. I . . . I couldn't hold them. They were pulling me. I thought I was going."

"And then?"

"The rope broke."

"*What?*" I said. There must have been incredulity in my voice. He had shown me his rope proudly some days before; he had got it from a guide, and it flashed into my mind that neither of the other fellows was any great weight.

He gave me a frightened glance. "I think they must have . . . must have cut it."

"Cut it?"

"Yes, to save me."

I paused, my mind turning over what he had said. "And they . . . and you saw them go over?"

He nodded and gulped.

"You're quite sure?"

He nodded again. He had broken into sobs once more, and I stood staring at him, absorbed in the horror of the thing. Then I pulled myself together.

"Come on," I said; "get up! We must get back to the hotel and do something about it."

I put my arms round him and hauled him on to his feet. He stood leaning limply against me. For the first time I noticed the rope. It was wound twice round his waist and

knotted. Beyond the knot there was about two feet, no more, of loose end. I took it in my hand and examined it. It had been cut, clean and sharp, with a knife. Our eyes met, his blazing with terror : his lips were shrunk against his gums like the grey, shrunken mouth of a corpse. Poor, wretched young devil ! His childishness, the utter hopelessness of him, penetrated me suddenly.

" You'd better take that off," I said. I undid the knot for him and then rolled it into the smallest possible coil. " Now, stand on your feet," I said.

He braced himself, and I left him standing. I found a deep hole in the huddle of boulders that lined the track and pushed the coil far into it. " There ! " I said. " You lost the rope, if anyone wants to know. You have a knife ? "

He brought it out of his pocket, a large brand-new jack-knife, and gave it with a trembling hand. I dropped it into a crevice among the stones. " Now, come along ! " I took his arm. " We must get back to the hotel."

At the lower end of the meadow we met his parents. I handed him over and ran on to the village to get hold of a guide and arrange a search-party. I didn't see the Hannets again. My friend turned up that evening and I was glad to leave the hotel next day.

MILWARD KENNEDY

"*Are Murders Meant?*"

It was a publisher who advanced to me the general theory that there is a certain moment when a potential or theoretical murderer begins to put his theories into practice. "The point is reached," he said, "when his sense of irritation, whatever form it takes, whether irritation at poverty or a woman or something else, becomes so strong that he embarks upon a murder."

It is obvious that an author does not hastily disagree with a publisher; moreover, on the face of it, this general proposition seemed reasonable enough. The law requires that for an act to be murder there must be malice aforethought—a previous intention to kill, or premeditation; and previous intention clearly implies a decision. But the publisher was not taking his stand on technicalities, nor attempting to hold, as the law may do, that only when the decision and intention to kill are so close in time to the act as to impart the element of accident is a verdict of voluntary manslaughter possible.

For that matter, the law seems to be a little uncertain. Suppose that, in a sudden quarrel with a stranger, a man loses his temper, picks up a bottle, bashes the other fellow

over the head, and kills him: well and good, this may be voluntary manslaughter. But suppose the victim is a neighbour with whom the assailant also quarrelled a month ago, the chances are that he will be declared a murderer; and yet it is quite possible, and a judge has said that it may properly be so argued, that because there was this interval of time between the first quarrel and the fatal one, therefore there was no premeditation of the act of killing. In other words, a man may equally be hanged on the ground that he had a chance to let his anger die down and did not take it, or acquitted because the interval of inaction proves that he managed to master his anger.

Technicality or not, let us concede to the publisher that killing only becomes murder when there is previous intention to kill. It is then interesting to reflect upon the various aspects which the intention and the premeditation may assume.

There are those who consider that the hot-blooded murderer deserves a less severe penalty than the cold-blooded one. This is a dangerous line of thought to follow; for if we begin by thinking one "intent to kill" more deliberate than another, we may end by wondering whether the law is not too ready to find intent where—from the point of view of ordinary human beings—none existed. I apologise to lawyers; their friends can explain my meaning to them.

It is commonly said that the intention to kill is clearest in the case of poisoning. It is true that our minds and senses do not measure time like a clock—I myself remember how, one morning in France in 1915, it was pitch dark, and then we were attacked and it was broad daylight, and for me there was no interval of time. But it is difficult to think that a man can go slowly and even laboriously to work to procure a fatal poison, and then go stealthily to work to

administer it, and yet have no slow, cold-blooded intention to kill. Can one feel any doubt about an Armstrong ? [1]

And yet I cannot help thinking that a man may have recourse to poison not only because he thinks it his safest method, but also because he is squeamish and shrinks from the thought of bloody violence. I wonder how far the special repugnance which is felt for the poisoner is due to dislike of his cold-bloodedness and how far to other things ? Is there, for example, a feeling that it is unfair to the victim to give him no chance to make a fight of it ? Is there the same kind of confusion of thought as about poison gas—that it is necessarily more unpleasant to die of it than of lead ? Is there even a mixture of those sentiments, and added to them a traditional dread of poison which has descended from days when witchcraft was active in men's lives ?

Put on one side for the moment the question whether all poisonings are equally cold-blooded : consider instead whether murders by violence may not be born of as cold a delibera-

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[1] I wrote to Mr. Milward Kennedy complaining that the murderers and murder trials referred to in this article would not be familiar to readers. He replied that I was quite wrong, but volunteered for my enlightenment the following information, which I insert here as a footnote. L. D.

Burke and Hare—have figured so largely on our English stage in recent years.

Landru—almost as well known as Blue Beard ? And has been constantly written up.

Smith—I've met him even in charades, " Famous Men " series, in casual evenings in Chelsea. And he's in the Marshall Hall book.

Rouse—only a year or so ago.

Milsom and Fowler—less known except to criminologists (a " stock " case to them).

Jacoby—see Milsom and Fowler.

Robinson—one of the best-known Trunk Murderers.

Patrick Mahon—he's been written up constantly—in the Sunday papers within the last six months or so.

tion. Williams, the Ratcliffe Highway murderer, whom De Quincey has made for ever notorious, went out to murder Marr. It seems obvious that he had no plan for robbing Marr without murdering him, and it seems equally certain that his plan was to murder the entire household; for there was no question of his being interrupted in his theft, or even the first murder, and so of his destroying an interrupter as a measure of "precaution." How long in advance of his crime he decided to commit it, no one can say, nor, perhaps, is this important. Some minds move more quickly than others: what makes a crime deliberate is surely that the murderer has taken whatever time he needs to lay his plans and equip himself for their execution.

There are so many instances of violent murders where there has certainly been premeditation that it is difficult to choose a "typical" one. Where murder has been adopted as a business undertaking (as with Burke and Hare, or Landru, or Brides-in-the-Bath Smith) there is no room for speculation except about the premeditation of the *first* murder; and it is hard to believe that a man who can make murder his profession can have felt much compunction about his first essay. A more interesting case was a recent one where the murderer shot his victim and set fire to the premises, so staging things as, he hoped, to make it appear that the murderer himself was the dead man. That clearly was a case of murder for a reward in the form of money, and it must have involved as much forethought and preparation as any poisoning. It was a curious one, too, since it followed not long after Rouse's complete failure to pass off a burnt corpse as his own. His imitator presumably was confident that he could do better than Rouse; and perhaps he was right in thinking that he could succeed where others failed, for he did manage one seemingly hopeless achievement—he con-

trived to poison himself when under arrest and in a police cell.

In a case of violent murder is it possible to estimate the extent of the premeditation by studying the murderer's equipment or his plan of action? Can one go further and say that the more trouble a man has taken over the procuring of his weapon, the greater the likelihood that he has contemplated its use for murder? Suppose that a thief stabs a woman who catches him at his work, and that he does so with a carving-knife, and that the knife is one which he has been at pains to obtain secretly: can it be argued that from the first he contemplated leaving the knife behind him, and that if he had wanted it merely to break into a cupboard he need not have contemplated jettisoning it? But a carving-knife wet with blood is a dangerous possession.

Here, at all events, we have a type of murder where the intention to kill is conditional. We have, too, one of the motives for murder which must surely seem very strange to the majority of us (who, happily, are not murderers). It is the motive of fear disguised as self-protection.

A man, not hitherto a criminal, decides upon a burglary. His state of irritation against poverty (as the publisher perhaps would put it) reaches a point where he decides to steal. He is interrupted. He picks up a poker and knocks down his interrupter. He batters him to death, and after death. In his fear of being caught in the burglary, he takes the far graver risk of murder.

In an age of central heating and of gas and electric fires, a poker is no longer a weapon which a burglar can be confident that he will find at hand. Its use may suggest that he lost his head. The needless violence may argue in the same direction. Such a case may differ in circumstances rather than in kind from the "sudden quarrel with a stranger." But if the burglar sets out with such a weapon as a loaded

revolver, is not that his provision against discovery? Surely he must deliberately have decided that in certain circumstances he will do murder. He does not set out to do murder, he has no desire to murder—indeed, his hope must be that his burglary will be undisturbed. Yet he has decided upon murder if he is (as he feels) "obliged" to it. Is this man to be classed among the cold-blooded and calculating wretches for whose legal fate few feel any pity? Instances come at once to mind which suggest that such murderers—Peace, or Brown and Kennedy, or Milsom and Fowler (who fought even in the dock, after they were condemned to death)—are among the most detestable. And yet in this class there may be men who have scarcely realised themselves that they have taken this conditioned decision, who out of sheer inexperience have taken chisel or knife to break open a nonexistent cupboard. The youth Jacoby, I think, murdered out of a kind of panic; but the burglar *de carrière* who takes a loaded revolver seems to me to be a candidate for the company of Burke and Hare.

There are, then, these cases where murder is used to conceal a lesser crime. It is noticeable that here what is often said to be the murderer's chief problem—the disposal of the body—frequently does not arise. The criminal's primary purpose is the lesser crime; his dominant desire and aim is to conceal his connection with this, and not the fact that murder has been done. Brown and Kennedy, whatever the exploit in which they were interrupted, indulged in no attempts to make it appear that the hapless Gutteridge had fled to South America with the proceeds of the Police Sports. They were interrupted, they killed, and they drove on.

Is a distinction possible between a man who is prepared to kill when engaged on another crime and the man who, having stolen, does murder to conceal his theft? The classic

example here is, I suppose, the murder of Lord William Russell by his valet. Courvoisier had robbed his master—out of irritation against poverty, no doubt. His master had found it out and had dismissed him. Courvoisier knew, or thought, that no one shared his master's knowledge, and that night he cut Lord William's throat. The murder was so cunningly carried out (Courvoisier going naked to his task, so that there should be no blood-stained clothing to betray him) that his attempt to conceal theft by murder almost succeeded. But the police discovered some of the stolen articles in his quarters: the theft, so far from being concealed by the murder, betrayed the murderer. A chance recognition of Courvoisier from a newspaper report did the rest.

It is a small step from a Courvoisier to the man who kills to conceal what is not so much a crime as a domestic or financial delinquency. Disgrace can be more dreadful than imprisonment: Dr. Webster, pillar of an American University, was so enraged by his highly respectable creditor's demands for repayment that he murdered him, and came near to disposing of his remains in his laboratory—his ship was utterly wrecked upon a set of false teeth. Patrick Mahon's tangle was both financial and matrimonial; Rouse was in somewhat similar plight; and there was Robinson of Rochester Row, and many another convicted murderer.

Here we reach the problem of the disposal of the body. The murderer needs to dispose of it because if it is discovered (either at all or in what, to him, is the wrong place) his own connection with the victim will inevitably bring him under disastrous suspicion. Rouse, of course, went a stage beyond that, and he too (so it seems to me) is a candidate for the Burke and Hare class. He obviously had a plan to enable him to disappear and make a "fresh start": all that he needed was a body—as did Burke and Hare. Deliberate

planning must have preceded his crime, and it is imaginable that he made more than one night journey before he found a suitable victim—an unknown whose disappearance no one would realise.

I do not see how there could be two opinions about Rouse. But the American Professor is a shade more doubtful: he happened to have at his disposal, without any planning, as good apparatus for making a body vanish as any murderer could reasonably hope for. This, at all events, is a useful reminder that it may not be safe to judge his degree of premeditation by the murderer's arrangements to dispose of the body. If that is so, is it possible to argue that when Mahon bought the knife which he was soon to use to dismember his victim at the Crumbles, he had not necessarily decided, once and for all, to murder her? His may have been a conditional decision: if he could not get her to go her way in silence, *then* her fate was sealed. He may have hoped that she would go her way, if only because of the peril which he himself would thereby avoid.

Are there, then, distinctions to be drawn between one "conditional decision" and another? Is the libertine who decides "I must kill her if she will not go" any better or worse than the burglar who is ready to shoot whoever interrupts him?

One thing seems clear. It is not possible to judge the degree of premeditation from the steps taken *after* a murder to dispose of the body. It is hard, in any case, to believe that Robinson *planned* to commit a murder cheek by jowl with one of the biggest police stations in London; but, in addition, it was only after the woman was dead that he procured the trunk in which he removed her body.

And can there be premeditation of a murder and yet only a last-second decision to kill? I wonder whether the Thomp-

son–Bywaters case could be so described. They wrote and talked about the murder of her husband. Some may say that it was all deadly serious, others that it was an exciting make-believe. Powdered glass and Belladonna; but suddenly and rather clumsily Bywaters used his knife. Imagine a small boy who at the beginning of the summer term boasted of his joy in diving in as soon as the swimming-bath was opened. Somehow the day is so far away that it can never come. But it does, and he stands on the edge of the cold water and imagines, rightly or wrongly, that his friend to whom he boasted is watching him, scornfully. Against his wishes, he dives in.

Now to return to poisonings : must poisoners be all alike ? Because a man buys poison six months before he " uses " it, is it proved that he decided on his crime six months ahead—or even that he decided on it conditionally ? If a man uses weed-killer or sheep-dip to do murder, is it certain that he bought it for that purpose ? If one wife patiently extracts arsenic from fly-papers and as patiently administers it to her muscular and detestable husband, is she more or less horrible than the wife who seizes her chance and shifts round two bottles on a shelf so that her drunken brute helps himself to the wrong one ?

To discuss the motives for murder would be to go outside my subject. But as motives are not to be plainly labelled " Hatred " or " Money " (or subdivided into " Money quâ Food " and " Money quâ Women " and so on), so the shapes which the decision to commit murder may take are numerous and confused. Nor can they be measured by any rule of thumb. I venture so far as to suggest that the fact that a body without head or hands has been deposited in a trunk in a cloak-room is not certain proof that there has been murder.

An unmarried woman who is to bear a child may make her own plans to "disappear," and in a way that will cause her few friends no anxiety. If the man refuses to marry her (and he may have less reason than she to dread the alternative publicity), it may be the woman who is driven to desperation. It may only be when she is dead, by her own hand, that the man finds his position awkward. If he is cool and level-headed, with "no illusions" (which means that as he himself usually thinks the worst, so he expects others to do the same), he may feel that there is less risk to him in making the body unrecognisable and leaving it in a cloak-room than in telling the true story to an incredulous policeman or just leaving the body where it is, to be discovered in the end. Head and hands: how easy to take them in a picnic basket, into the woods, or out to sea. He need do nothing to delude the woman's friends—she has seen to that for her own sake. He has only to keep cool, to deposit the trunk as casually as do thousands of others every day, and after that—to do nothing. For a murderer to do nothing must demand enormous self-control: but here the task is easier—he is a man who is conscious of his innocence because he did not kill the woman. Such an "innocent" may be as detestable as a murderer.

You cannot illustrate fact by an analysis of fiction, but the converse is to a certain extent true. In a further article to appear in the December issue of Lovat Dickson's Magazine, *Mr. Milward Kennedy will discuss the principles, derived above from historical cases, as they apply to literary studies of murder. Our readers may not agree with all of Mr. Milward Kennedy's deductions. Correspondence on the subject is invited.* L. D.

GORDON DANBY

Aren't We the Same?

1896 is memorable to me because in that year my Aunt Maria married my Uncle Charles Downside. She lived to regret it. Uncle Charles had left this world before I came on it, so I know him only by the large framed photograph which hung in my Aunt Maria's study, in which he figures prominently in the centre of a wedding group, gazing into the distance as though pondering the appalling nature of the step he has taken. My Aunt Maria eyes the camera with an air of triumph; no modest dropping of the eyes, no hint in her bearing of the innocent initiate poised on the threshold of experience. She was thirty-six, and the taking of Charles Downside, which had occupied her attention and energy for nearly five years, marked her at the point of victory with the look of one breathing a sigh of relief.

As I say, she lived to regret it. When she buried Charles Downside five years later, she must have breathed a second vast sigh of relief. The camera had caught Uncle Charles in pensive mood. The photograph shows him a chubby little man with large moustaches; and the general contour of his face and body, and what can be seen of his eye, indicate him to have been a merry fellow. Legend bears this out.

Charles was exuberant, my father tells me; Aunt Maria hints that he was thoughtless, was too fond of jolly company and the bottle. But the threads of all the evidence I can pick up incline me to think that he was a very ordinary mortal, with a child's gregarious nature, a love of the light that the sun gave, and of the glow that came through friendship and sympathy. When these weren't apparent, he turned to the bottle. Aunt Maria could sustain herself on the conventions and beliefs of her time: Uncle Charles couldn't; for him the fellowship, the converse and the wine were the only available antidotes to blackest night without.

At just that period, though my Uncle Charles, poor fellow! did not know it, social conventions and restraints were slackening a little. These things do not change over-night. A rebel here, a rebel there; soon there is a band joined in revolt, and a sound of creaking and groaning as the social machinery turns to adjust itself to new conditions. There was just such a creaking and groaning as I describe at the time when Galsworthy's Soames was in love with Irene. Soames was a rebel, differing in some characteristics from my Uncle Charles, Soames having a beauty for a wife and a mind of his own, whereas my Uncle Charles had neither. But they were both there, Soames and my Uncle Charles, standing on the shore of that placid lake of Victorian society, flinging in stones and watching the ripples and disturbances spread themselves out to the farthest shores. Soames and my Uncle Charles; and there was another whom I have just met: Marcus Hardde.

Marcus Hardde is a new figure in literature. Once, long ago, he was "Marcus Hardde, dealer in . . ." and then the possession of a small shop of his own had seemed the zenith

of achievement. He felt that he was on the high road to fortune; as indeed he was, for he made money, and went on making money, until at the end of the century he was a millionaire. Reckoning up his life towards the end of the nineteenth century, he knew that he had conquered wealth and had subdued any of his fellow men who had stood in his way. His business interests lay in South Africa. On the road to power he had ridden roughshod over Boers and natives, he had fought and vanquished the diamond interests; he had even spoken out his mind to Cecil Rhodes. A single store in Cape Town had expanded into branches in Johannesburg, Bulawayo, Pietermaritzburg. His retail shop had become a gigantic wholesale business with its headquarters in London. There, in 1896, was Marcus Hardde, rich and respected, but unhappy, and about to do battle with something whose strength this shopkeeper from Cape Town, and for that matter young Mr. Soames Forsyte and my Uncle Charles were at one in understanding and despising. A trio of gallant gentlemen. You know Soames's story and are familiar with the outline of my Uncle Charles's career. Briefly, this is what happened to Marcus Hardde. . . .[1]

Sisters' Circus gave distinction to the village of March Elms. Most villages have one, or sometimes two big houses on their outskirts, but March Elms had three. They stood together, joined by a drive, and each of the three, with its flight of wide steps to the front door, with its pillared porch, and its pediment above the upper storey, was a replica of the other. The houses had originally been built by the daughters of a certain Admiral Thraxted, that each sister

[1] A full picture of this interesting character will be found in Miss Marian Bower's new novel *Sisters' Circus*, which has just been published. A reading of that book gave rise to the random reflections here set down.

might enjoy the satisfaction of being mistress in her own home, and yet all three of them live out their days side by side. Officially, the houses were numbered plain One, Two and Three, but locally the custom had grown up of calling them after the sisters: Harriet, Juliana and Lucinda.

Captain Quy, R.N., lived at Lucinda; Percival Thraxted and his wife at Harriet; and Juliana had just been inherited by young Captain Rodney Herrison, who proposed, to the consternation of his neighbours, to sell it.

Now, *Sisters' Circus* was rather like a limited liability company in which no director is justified in acting without consulting the opinions of his colleagues. Rodney Herrison's intention to sell his inheritance was only less dismaying than his decision to sell his commission, and to go into business and make a lot of money. In Marcus Hardde he found the means of satisfying both ambitions, for Marcus gave him employment and, attracted by the house, took the first steps towards purchasing it.

These steps were blocked at every turn by Captain Quy and Percival Thraxted. Earnest consultations took place behind the library doors of the houses. But Marcus Hardde, who was well trained in the art of over-riding obstacles, went forward steadily with his plans, and the purchase was completed. There was really nothing to stop him except the conventions of an age that was in its decline; conventions which said that a man who kept a shop was not a neighbour to have. He had made a fortune out of business, too, a fact which to Percival Thraxted particularly, and in some degree to Captain Quy, made him an object of suspicion.

Marcus Hardde affected to scorn this attitude, but nevertheless he entertained some respect for it. He, Marcus Hardde, knew a good neighbour when he saw one, just as he knew a good bargain; and in the light of his own needs the Thraxteds

and the Quys were eminently suitable. He wanted his own daughter to be "on Christian name terms" with Angela Thraxted. He wanted himself to bask in company which he could not have entered twenty years before, but to which his wealth and position of power now gave him the right of entrance.

The story of Marcus Hardde's attack upon the walls of late Victorian convention is in the tradition of Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*. The whole of one's sympathy, however, does not go to the interloper. The Quys and the Thraxteds, backing before a wave of social change that in the next twenty years was going entirely to change their set of values, demand sympathy too.

My Uncle Charles, if you will excuse his interrupting again, had a nephew who after the War betook himself to Canada, hoping there to find work of which there seemed no prospect at all in England. The youth, Alexander, was what would be called a gentleman. His immediate forbears had been persons of education and refinement and a certain degree of wealth.

Alexander looked for work in Montreal, and found it in the dockyards fumigating ships—this was the time of the really bad influenza epidemic at the end of 1918. Later he worked as a taxi-driver in Toronto, where his adventures were startlingly like Juan's in Eric Linklater's famous book; in a coal-mine in Alberta; as a farm hand in Saskatchewan; and finally as a private detective in the employment of a mysterious and not very reputable agency in Toronto. Alexander, unlike my Uncle Charles, is a solemn youth, portentous with a dignity that nothing can disturb, and a careful observer, I should think, of the social scene. By that I mean that Alexander would have been the first to sense any slight or outrage in people's treatment of him.

He assures me solemnly that there was not. Away from his work, he roamed at large in the society of each of the towns and districts where his quest for jobs had led him. His hosts knew that he was a farm-hand, or a taxi-driver, or a coal-miner, or whatever he happened to be at that particular period, but the knowledge made no difference to their reception of him. Alexander would have been bewildered by the fact, had not a proper conceit of himself—noticeable, by the way, in all my cousins—sustained his dignity.

I quote Alexander because I have his story at first hand, and because it is taken from life. His experiences could be echoed by many others of our generation who have watched the social revolution which will occupy in future historical books the dates 1890–1934.

In 1890 the distinctions between one class and another were clearly defined and rigorously upheld. In 1934 these distinctions are blurred and are not very seriously regarded. The War has had something to do with the change; it accelerated it. The growth of democratic ideals has had a great deal more. But most of all the Depression is responsible for the upheaval. Social restrictions have been swept away by that economic tide that so steadily, since the turn of the century, has been running out from the shore of middle-class and upper-class society where for a century or more it had been dammed up. In the wash it has taken most of the privileges of class, most of what my Uncle Charles and Marcus Hardde's generation counted virtues. You may consider Alexander in respect of his Canadian adventures as a piece of flotsam tossed about on the surface of an angry sea; and my Uncle Charles, who was earlier in time, as a bit of driftwood bobbing about where the waves thin out and beat themselves flat against the shore. They are in the tradition of change; the one at the beginning of it, the other

at the climax. But is climax the right word? Does social revolution ever cease? Is not the only really perpetual motion in the universe that of change and decay?

Uncle Charles and Cousin Alexander are aspects of this particular problem taken from life. Soames and Marcus Hardde are characters taken from literature. And because they are manipulated by such competent creators, their stories are more interesting, and the picture of social change they reveal is more arresting and complete than anything in the lives of my Uncle Charles and his nephew. Soames and Marcus Hardde stand, too, at the beginning of one age and the end of another. The end of an age which, possessing the vision of a personal God, admitted no religious doubts; and at the beginning of an age in which social dissatisfaction was to express itself chiefly in denying a personal God. Wealth, for the first time in history, was to become general; a democratic instead of an autocratic privilege, but in the change was to lose nothing of its power and influence. The restlessness engendered by these two vast changes, the one in the nature of religion and the other in the distribution of wealth, was to lend to their period the appearance of a more accelerated and complete metamorphosis than any the social historians can trace. The restrictions, social, moral and religious, of the mid-nineteenth century, were to give way to the freedom of thought and behaviour and the democracy of the twentieth century.

The process of rationalising the mysteries of religion by completely ignoring them seems to have been completed in our time. Generally speaking, the generations under forty do not go to church, though they protest, most of them, that what they object to is "orthodox" religion, and they lay claim to as deep a sense of religion as their fathers ever

had. But the process of democratising wealth has not solved the economic problems of the age. We are free in comparison with the Victorians, but the range of our freedom is only the length of the chain that binds us to the stump of reality.

We may marry whom we like, provided we have enough money to do it. We may keep up with the finest, most aristocratic company as long as we have the money to support our estate. We need not fear nor respect any man, or court the patronage of anybody, unless he is in a position to give us a job, and we are in need of one. Nobody will deny the freedom of action of which we can boast. But [Samuel Johnson is speaking] "They make a point about *universal* liberty, without considering that all that is to be valued, or indeed can be enjoyed by individuals, is *private* liberty." And I am not sure that we have not exchanged the moral and social restrictions of Marcus Hardde's age for the economic restrictions of our own. We have won universal liberty by establishing firmly the ideals of democracy, but we have only established the theory without inventing the means to experience the practice. And that is the most valuable lesson Marian Bower's *Sisters' Circus* can teach us.

So Cousin Alexander and I, on behalf of our generation, bow to Marcus Hardde, Soames Forsyte and my Uncle Charles from this side of the water and bid them farewell. They have flung their stones in the lake, but the ripples have reached the outer bank, ring by ring, and have died away, and now the surface is as smooth and placid as though they had not passed this way. But only time changes. Cousin Alexander and I have our own problems; we have exchanged their shackles for a set of our own. He looks at me, and I at him. The solemn youth bends and picks up a stone. It ends the arc of its journey with a splash, and again the ripples spread out in ever-widening rings, towards the shore.

H. E. BATES

The Mad Woman

Two boys were lounging against the stone sill of a baker's corner-shop. They were not more than seven or eight, and they wore short trousers which came above their knees and little round caps which stuck like buns on the backs of their heads. The street was dark except for the shop gas-light, which threw pale greenish rectangles across the pavement, and a street lamp down the alley-way of houses. The boys lounged in attitudes of muscular languor, blatantly, their hands thrust into the tops of their trousers, their feet crossed, and their shoulders hunched, as though they were men, labourers, waiting for something to turn up. They had seen men in just such attitudes lounging at pub-corners. Now and then, without speaking and without changing their lolling attitudes, they spat in competition. Occasionally they spat as far as the roadway, but it was a rare event. They spat with manful ferocity, clearing their throats in readiness, as though the pinnacle of achievement in life would have been to spit over the chimneys of the opposite houses.

Finally they gave it up. It was boring; everything was boring. They had nothing to do but loll against the shop window and spit. It was part of the curse of extreme youth

that there was nothing to do. They longed to be men. It was only in boyhood that life was pointless.

"Why ain't there a fire, or summat?" they would say.

It was not that they lacked imagination. They had tied the door-knobs of adjacent houses together and had hobbled the horses of bakers' carts and had conceived an invisible apparatus of string and tin by which water could be upset on the heads of passing ladies. But there is an end to all things.

Once, in the past, it had been different. They had had a confederate. A French boy. His father was a detective in Paris and drank blood. That was why the son was so daring. They even had his word for it that he too drank blood. His father would bring home the blood in a wine-bottle, and André would take a sip on the quiet. It was criminal's blood. In consequence, André could do anything. They recalled how he would climb the house-roofs and pour water down the chimney-pots, and how he would perpetually carry a revolver about with him. A tremendous fellow. How much better to have been born in France.

And in consequence, without André, life was pointless. They were jaded. Spitting desultorily, sideways, it was as though they spat the flat taste of it out of their mouths. Tired of searching for excitement in their own lives, they longed for catastrophe in the lives of others—a fire, a domestic row, an accident, a pub-fight. But nothing happened. The street was empty.

Suddenly, however, the elder conceived a terrific idea. It aroused him like an internal explosion. He stood abruptly upright, his mouth and eyes widened, as though he could scarcely believe it. It seemed to him a stupendous notion.

"Come on!" he said. "Let's go and look at the mad woman."

The other also stood upright. They looked at each other with open mouths, their minds swaying slightly, as though drunk on the expectation of it all. Then for a moment it seemed almost too immense. It was fantastic. And momentarily they even doubted themselves.

" She ain't safe," one said. " She's dopey."

" She couldn't hurt us. She's locked up. They keep her chained up."

" She eats kids. I know."

" She don't eat nothing. She don't eat nothing for six weeks, sometimes. She don't go out. She don't take her clothes off."

" What'd she do if she see us ? "

" Go mad. Raving."

" What'd she do if she went mad ? "

" Kill us. Shall we go ? "

Simultaneously they moved off down the street. They left the street and walked through others. It was very dark; factories and houses stood in lines of unbroken gloom. The boys walked fast, swaggering. They could feel the small hairs standing upright on their bare legs and brushing stiffly against their trousers. They hardly spoke. Now and then they spat again, carelessly, as if to emphasise that they were not afraid.

Finally they came to a house that stood alone, in its own grounds, shielded from the street by a barricade of sombre fir-trees, very old, and a stone wall ridged with broken glass. They paused, standing in awe. The dark house, the black fir-trees and even the dark sky beyond seemed altogether sinister. The house itself seemed dead; there were no lights. And standing there, they thought of the old woman. Where was she ? What was she doing ? Perhaps she had been taken away ? Periodically they had seen her taken away, in

the black asylum fly, at the end of some period of violence. The signal for those periods of madness was that she would begin to throw her chamber-pots from the bedroom windows, the china smashing on the street below. And until the fly and the asylum officer came no one could go in to her. There was no one who dare touch her. The crowd would stand in the street below, in awe at her frenzies, or cheering whenever the chamber-pots came crashing down. Finally, the asylum officer, arriving in the black fly, would go into the house, the mad frenzy of smashing of china would quieten down, and presently the old woman would appear at the doorway, in a high fruit-garnished hat of black and purple and scarlet, and a long coat of faded velvet. She would carry in one hand a sunshade of mauve silk and cling with the other hand to the arm of the asylum officer, her head uplifted with silly and triumphant devotion, in the insane belief that he had come to marry her and that the fly would take them away to their wedding and their honeymoon. In time, however, she always returned.

They contemplated the wall in awe and silence. It was double their height. They had never before noticed how high it was. Then they remembered the wicket gate through which they had seen the old woman emerge in the belief that it was her wedding day.

They began to go along the wall towards the gate. They no longer walked. They moved flat along the wall, with a sliding motion, as though on casters, their hands and bodies pressed hard against the stones. They moved on tip-toe, with great stealth, silently. They were conspirators. At intervals they heard imaginary footsteps, strange sounds, curious whispers in the fir-trees. They had no doubt that, with terrific unexpectedness, the old woman would presently leap out at them. Finally, when they reached the gate and

halted, they had forgotten everything but the gate, the old woman, and the thunder of their own hearts.

And standing there, tremulous, they whispered for a moment.

"What'll she do if she sees us?"

"Whack a pot at us."

They laughed, but the sound of their own laughter seemed tremendous, and they silenced themselves.

"Ssh. Open the gate."

"You open it."

"You. Go on. You."

At last they leaned on the gate and pushed it together. It was locked. It was a high iron-bound gate of oak, and along the top ran invisible ribbons of barbed wire. Climbing up, they cut their fingers on the wire-spikes, and made sounds of pain by drawing in their breath as they dropped down into the garden on the other side.

Then, as they stood in the garden, in the darkness under the trees, listening, their legs began to go cold and hot, the hairs bristling in spasms of horror. They sucked the blood off their hands; in the darkness they could distinguish nothing but patches of greater darkness, trees and bushes and the black mass of the house itself. They began to creep through the bushes, stumbling. Presently they were clear of the bushes and walking on grass. In the bushes they had a fear that the old woman was waiting for them somewhere beyond; in the grass it was as though she were behind them, in the shrubbery, pursuing them.

They went on across the lawn without speaking or daring to speak. They were very near the house. And the house became identified with the old woman, so that they were half-afraid of it. They skirted round it, wide, keeping to the grass. They moved more than ever as though on casters.

At the back of the house they halted abruptly. A light was shining in a window. They could see the regular bars of light formed by the slats of venetian blinds. It was very quiet. They waited in a kind of expectant horror for something to happen, for the old woman to appear, to rush out and suddenly tear them to pieces.

But nothing happened. And presently they went a few steps nearer the light, and then halted, and then went on, and then halted again, and so on, until they were under the window. The yellow horizontal strips of light fell on their faces. It was just light enough to see a stone coping running along the wall, and finally they put their feet on the coping and their hands on the sill and drew themselves up, slowly, so that they could look into the window.

They stared through the venetian slats with a kind of quiet horror, in suspense. There, in the room, was the old woman. The room seemed very large, and the old woman, all alone, was sitting at a black round table in the centre of it. It seemed to the boys that she was behaving very strangely. She was doing nothing. She was simply sitting quite motionless, staring into space. They remembered her, in her high fruit-decked hat, as a tall woman, with wild eyes and a half-suppressed air of madness. Now she seemed very small, as though she had shrunken. She was very quiet too. They saw, after a moment, that she looked small only because she was sitting very low in her chair, in a pose of vacant dejection. Then they noticed another thing. She was wearing her hat and coat: not the high gay hat in which they had so often seen her, nor the mauve coat, but a yellow, white-feathered hat of a distant period, and a white summer coat of some soft flounced material faded to drab ivory. She looked as though she had just come in from a journey and was too tired to take off her clothes; or as though she were just

going on a journey and did not know quite where she wanted to go. There was a strange expression on her face, an expression of complete emptiness, of perfect negation, almost beautiful. It seemed to belong to another world.

As they scotched on the coping, looking at her, the boys gradually began to feel disappointed. They still stared in suspense, but their horror thinned and dribbled away. It was as though they had been cheated.

"She ain't in chains. You said she was in chains."

"Her feet are chained. You can't see 'em. They're under the table."

"What's she doing?"

"She's gone to sleep with her eyes open. That's how dopey folks do. Go to sleep with their eyes open, so they can sleep and see at the same time."

"D'y think she can see us?"

"She can see us all right. She's only waiting."

They ceased whispering and watched in silence again. The old woman did not move. Against the background of golden varnished wall-paper, faded a little, and the great mahogany sideboard arrayed with tea-caddies and silver pots and wine decanters, all glittering and shining in the gas-light, she looked like someone in a picture. Her face was the same yellowish faded colour as her coat. Her eyes had no colour, but were filmed over and unflickering. She seemed not only to belong to another world, but to an unhappy world. She sat there as though transfixed in everlasting dejection.

The two boys did not know what to think of her. And then, after a time, they noticed another thing. She was really moving all the time. Her lips were opening and shutting with tiny rapid motions. And they noticed also, on the wall opposite her, a mirror, and they could see, then,

that she was talking to the reflection of herself. It was a silent conversation. Her lips never opened any wider than the thin slits of light coming through the venetian blinds, and her teeth remained shut behind them.

They were ready to give it up. It was beyond them. They had expected to see her chained up; they had had visions of her in a perpetual lunatic struggle for escape. And here she was talking to herself. They were ready to despise her.

They scotched higher up the wall for a final look at her. And then, as though she heard the scraping of their feet on the wall, she moved. She turned her head briefly in the direction of the sound and moved her body slightly in the chair.

It was as though she had leapt clean through the window at them. In their terror they fell off the coping. The echoes of their own frightened haste became the sounds of the old woman in mad pursuit. As they tore across the lawn and through the bushes and over the gate, they half-whimpered, half-laughed with terror, never looking back.

They did not stop until they could see the lights of the corner shop again. And then, when they paused and looked back, the street was empty.

And all at once, in retrospect, it seemed an altogether terrific affair.

"See the chains on her feet?"

"Yeh. I just see 'em."

"And how mad she looked. Ain't she ugly?"

"She's got a moustache. She's a man dressed up."

"And ain't she big? See her big hands? Think if she'd got hold of us."

"What'd she do if she got hold of us?"

"Cut us up. Dopey folks always cut you up."

They revelled for a moment in the delicious terror of it all. Their minds played with fictitious horrors, magnifying the things they thought they had seen her do and things they half-wished she had done.

" Once she'd got us in that house we'd never have got out again."

But, as they walked on, they had a revelation. It came to them almost simultaneously.

" How could she come after us if she was chained up ? That's why she never moved. See ? She couldn't. All looneys are chained up."

And as they went on, walking with a slight swagger again, looking back with derision at the memory of her sitting there motionless in her chair, everlastingly talking to the reflection of herself, they saw that they had no longer any need to be afraid of her.

They knew that she was chained for ever.

STRUTHERS BURT

Entertaining the Islanders[1]

David Banastre, a successful business man, is suddenly confronted with the realisation that he loathes all the measured capers, the hypocrisies and the moral misbehaviour of the New York society in which he moves. On the night that he makes this discovery, he meets Anita Fulton, who is married to a cad, Gene Fulton, and who is as tired as David of the social toils in which she is caught. David, for relief, travels from island to island in the Caribbean. Anita goes to her uncle, Julius Wack, a rich and cynical philosopher, who spends a large part of the year on the island of St. Birgitta, set like a jewel in that glamorous sea. Here by chance David eventually arrives; and against the lovely background of the island, and to the accompaniment of Mr. Wack's amusing and philosophical comment, David and Anita fall in love. Meanwhile Gene Fulton has lost all his money. David promises Anita that he will find a job for Gene, and he returns to the United States determined to give up his own work, advertising, but to find a job for Gene with his company before he does so; and then to return to St. Birgitta and to Anita. The following instalment brings David and Gene together for the first time.

[*Previous instalments have appeared in the June, July, August, September and October numbers.*]

NIGHT had come, soft and purple and velvet. Out on the lake, lighthouses stared with round single yellow eyes, and in the distance a steamer's portholes made a row of brilliant

[1] *Entertaining the Islanders*, by Struthers Burt. Lovat Dickson, 8*s.* 6*d.* net.

periods in the darkness. . . . This was Anita's city. She had gone up and down its streets. How many times she, too, must have looked out at the dark lake and the yellow eyes of the lighthouses!

David turned away from the window and going into the bathroom, switched on the brilliant bulb above the washstand. He had an hour in which to bathe and dress and meet Eugene Fulton, and some of Gene's friends, at a club for dinner. A small, informal dinner, for Gene was still in mourning.

David had seen Gene several times since his arrival in Chicago five days before, and so by now was entirely used to Gene. After considerable thought, he had come to the conclusion that Gene was not important enough to deserve much emotion one way or another. There was no particular sense in liking Gene, and there was certainly no sense in disliking him. Gene had stopped—brilliantly—somewhere around the age of twenty-two. David imagined that at his university Gene had been popular without any of his friends knowing just why, save that he was rich, well-dressed, good-looking, and had a way of speaking in abrupt, slightly weary phrases that sounded worldly and deep, sometimes clever, but which frequently meant nothing save that Gene was thinking of something else. Gene was still handsome, although dissatisfaction, making deep lines on either side of his petulant mouth, took possession of his face whenever it was in repose.

He had greeted David the first day, in David's hotel room, somewhat disconcertingly. David had written asking for an appointment, and around five o'clock in the afternoon Gene wandered in absent-mindedly, shook hands casually, without looking at David, and sank without enthusiasm into a chair.

" Anita wrote me "—his voice was slightly contemptuous—" that you have a job for me as an office boy, or something of the sort. . . . Do you mind if I help myself to a drink ? "

David looked at him with a similar lack of enthusiasm.

" Certainly not. Go ahead. No, it isn't quite that." David's manner stiffened. " As a matter of fact, it's a fairly good job with a large possible future—that is, if anything nowadays can be said to have a future." He lit a cigarette and sat back, studying with steady eyes Gene's averted face. Gene was staring down at the ice in his glass. " But that's all nonsense, of course. Sooner or later things will swing back to some extent, and then advertising—although perhaps in a new and more enlightened form—will come again into its own. If you're interested and want to work, I think this is an opportunity. I'm leaving the firm and so there'll be a shake-up anyway."

Gene raised his head with quick suspicion.

" Why are you leaving the firm ? "

" Because I want to write." David leaned forward, his expression more ingratiating. " Anita tells me you were on your university paper and that, after you left, you were for a while in the advertising end of a bond house. All that will help."

Gene surveyed him coolly and lingeringly.

" Why do you want to help me so much ? "

David shrugged his shoulders.

" Your wife asked me to, and I happened to have a job that was open. Down in St. Birgitta I got to be a very good friend of your wife and her uncle." He smiled. " Also your daughter."

A faint light stirred in Gene's eyes.

" She's a great kid—young Anita—isn't she ? " He sat up straight in his chair. " Well, there's no use in my putting on

style. I need a job, and I'll have to take one. When do I begin?"

"Next Monday, if that suits you."

"Fine. I'll be there. You'll give me some details, of course, before I see your manager?"

Had he consulted his inclinations, David would not have seen Gene at all. But he was not consulting his inclinations, he was living up to a promise which now even more than ever he felt bound to keep. In the beginning there had been attached to this promise no obligation save that of his friendship for Anita, but since then a very deep further obligation had been incurred, not only to Anita but even more so to Gene. Absurd and illogical? Perhaps. To take away a man's wife and give him a job in return might seem the height of romantic insincerity, yet, under the circumstances, David felt that the least he could do was to attempt to assure Gene's financial future.

Meeting Gene again, David had not felt so embarrassed or unhappy as he had feared that he would. Gene seemed entirely remote from Anita; no more than a friend, not so much as a brother. Not even a particularly warm friend. But David, watching Gene with brooding eyes, told himself that he would have to keep away from his thoughts the fact that Gene and Anita had once belonged to each other. Belonged to each other! What a disgusting phrase! The idea it suggested made David indignant. The phrase was based upon the old, outrageous tradition of physical proprietorship. To use it emphasised Anita's body to the extinction of her personality. Anita had never really belonged to Gene, but suppose that she had? Or suppose that one were marrying a widow? The phrase carelessly used handicapped men in their attitude toward woman and perverted grossly that attitude. What were you in love with? A woman, or her

largely adventitious past? The histories of most people were largely adventitious.

None the less, for the mere sake of mental comfort, in Gene's presence David kept his imagination in check.

"How are Anita and young Anita?" asked Gene languidly.

David wished to exhibit no especial warmth.

"Doing splendidly when I saw them last. Young Anita's with your aunt in New Hampshire now, isn't she?"

"Yes. If I'd had the money I'd have gone to meet her. Wack's a quaint old rabbit, isn't he?"

"Well, I wouldn't exactly call him a rabbit."

"Wouldn't you? Has a lot of ideas—mostly wrong."

"You think so?"

"Most ideas are wrong." Gene lit a cigarette and studied the flame of the match before blowing it out. "You and Anita got to be great friends, didn't you?" he said suddenly, raising his eyes.

"Great," said David. He found his pulse beating with a slow, watchful rhythm.

Gene relaxed.

"She's a nice girl, Anita, and damned pretty, but hard-headed as hell. Every now and then I've seen her a trifle tight, and then she's marvellous. But she hardly ever gets that way, and only by accident. I like women always to know they're women, don't you?"

David laughed mildly.

"I've never seen her tight, and I didn't find her hard-headed."

He hoped that there was no trace of anger in his eyes. Gene's remarks were beyond the limits of his own possibilities. Even if he hated a wife, he would not discuss her.

He had written Anita not to tell Gene her plans until he, David, had settled Gene in the Chicago office. Otherwise,

even Gene might rebel. Not from any real feeling, David had been sure of that even before he saw Gene, but merely because rebellion would be the conventional attitude. Once settled, if he liked his work, Gene would not care. He was too cynical and modern and lackadaisical to care. David was fully alert to the sardonicism of the situation, and the added sardonicism arising from the fact that, due to confused and by no means justified compunction on his part, he was offering Gene a position far better than the one he had first intended.

David walked in the hot July night from the hotel to the club where he was to meet Gene. He felt refreshed after his bath, and the touch of the warm air on his newly shaven cheeks was delicious. A candid and generous night, designed for mild adventure!

The club to which Gene had directed him occupied the two top stories of a tall office building. David was shot up to the twentieth story in a noiseless elevator. He stepped out into a lobby where Gene was waiting.

Gene's guests consisted of a blonde young banker and his wife . . . armoured in smiles, good manners, and a casual insincerity; a dark, thin-faced, beautiful, indefinite girl, whom David discovered later was a buyer for a dress shop; and a shimmering red-headed motion-picture actress on her way to New York.

David found himself between the banker's wife and the dark girl. The dark girl, he also discovered later on, like Gene, had been born to wealth but had lost hers long before Gene had lost his. She belonged to the old poor. She was about thirty, swift-minded; on the surface, hard and disillusioned. A dangerous woman, David decided . . . but only to herself. Too sensitive underneath. David was

afraid that she was in love with Gene. Her very eagerness to hide this fact betrayed it . . . her too great indifference to Gene, her studied cruelties of speech when he turned to her, her lapses of self-control when she hung too long on what he was saying to another person; her covert inspections of the shimmering actress. Clearly, too, Gene was contemplating devotion to the actress.

David felt sorry for the dark girl, and his distaste for Gene increased. He wondered if a sense of obligation wasn't getting the better of his judgment, even of his duty to Henderson, in this offering of a position to Gene. In some ways, Gene would be no great asset to a business, although in most ways he would be an asset. David shrugged his shoulders. Gene's private morals were his own out of office hours. He regretted, however, that Gene was so little honest-minded and so little considerate of the comfort of others, as to be capable of throwing together adventitiously two women in whom his interest was more than casual. If nothing else, it was unfair to your guests to make of a dinner party a possible jousting field. Both the actress and the dark girl, however, were entirely good-mannered. Neither by gesture nor speech did they betray their feelings toward each other. Presently David turned up a partial excuse for Gene, although not a good one. The actress was in Chicago for only a few hours. She had arrived that afternoon and was leaving at midnight. Evidently Gene was determined to lose none of her precious time.

This motion-picture actress was an unusual motion-picture actress. For two things, she was well-bred and intelligent; for a third, most exceptionally, she had a sense of humour. The banker's wife told David that because of these traits the red-haired girl was always given bad parts in Hollywood. But in her ordinary life, David had no fear for her. Her sense

of reality would protect her. If there was to be any punishment in the future, Gene would be the recipient. For the dark girl, his sorrow increased. She, too, was pleasantly civilised. In some ways more civilised than the majority of her fellow citizens. She had travelled too much, thought too much, worked too hard, been defeated too often, to have any respectful illusions left.

In the soft, portentous night, suspended between the hot stars and the dark mass of roofs, a score of immense domes and towers and pinnacles glowed with many colours; orange, and rose, and crimson, and deep-layered blue like the blue of sea grottoes—the summits of tall buildings.

Toward eleven o'clock he and Gene stood on the curb at the entrance to the club and said good-bye to Gene's other guests. The dark girl looked at David with a faint smile and the pressure of her hand was friendly. "She's nice!" thought David. "I like her and she likes me." Probably he would never see her again. That made all the more heart-warming the slight pressure of her hand. . . . Nice to be suddenly liked, and to like, in the big loneliness of the world!

"What's her name?" he asked as the cars drove away. "That dark girl? I mean—her first name. Her last name is Cerf. . . . I know that."

"Virginia," said Gene without interest. He was sullen because the motion-picture actress had refused to allow him to accompany her to the station. "Walk home with me?" he suggested to David.

The candid, generous night enticed David. "All right," he agreed.

He and Gene started across the bridge near at hand.

Gene laughed softly.

"I'm drunk," he said, "although no one would suspect it."

"Yes, I would," said David. "Your face is white, and sometimes when you move you're too definite, and at other times, you're not definite enough."

"You're bright."

"I know the symptoms. . . . I get that way myself."

Gene brooded over this for a moment of silence.

"It's a hell of a world in which you have to get drunk to get any kick out of living, isn't it?" he complained bitterly.

"You find it that way?" David disagreed. "I find it just the opposite. I don't get drunk much, and then only by accident, because there's too much kick. You lose the kick if you get drunk . . . at least, you certainly lose it the next morning."

Gene turned his head and looked at David sourly.

"You're a kind of damned Admirable Crichton, aren't you?"

David laughed.

"That's the first time I've been called that."

They walked on in silence. Presently Gene spoke as if to himself.

"My ancestors helped muddy that river back there," he said. "Some of those warehouses belonged to them. Now I don't own a damned thing."

"Nothing?" asked David.

"Oh, a lot of stocks and bonds that aren't even paying interest."

They came to Gene's dark and deserted house.

"Don't leave me," said Gene suddenly. "Come in and have a drink."

David hesitated.

"Very well. But for only a few minutes."

"I've just got an old cook left," said Gene ruefully.

He put his key into the keyhole and followed David into

a large panelled hall lit by a single lamp. The house was square and of brick; late Victorian, and in one of the quarters back of the Lake Shore Drive that fashion was deserting. David had been in the house two days before, and knew the odd arrangement; three stories as Mrs. Fulton had liked them, a top story that had been turned over entirely to Gene. The lower stories marked the transition period between the uncomfortable uprightness of the 'eighties and the chintzes of the early nineteen hundreds. They were like a frozen cotillion, cluttered with favours in the shape of photographs in ornate silver frames, gift books, small, unnecessary tables, beautiful and expensive fans in glass cases, paintings by Meissonier and Detaille, family portraits stiff with lack of inspiration on the part of both artist and sitter. The top story, Gene, sometime before his marriage, had turned into a complete and chaste bachelor apartment . . . white panelled, hung with a few valuable engravings and prints. Gene led David up to this apartment and switching on more lights, brought out a bottle of whisky and a couple of glasses.

"I'll have ice in a minute," he said, and disappeared into a pantry and returned presently with a bowl in his hand. He mixed himself a particularly stiff drink. "When I'm feeling this way," he explained, "the only thing that loosens up my nerves, is a big shot of the same medicine. Well . . . cheerio!"

He sat down on the edge of the table, swinging one leg and turning his glass thoughtfully around in his hand.

"Did you ever have a valet, Banastre?" he asked.

David laughed.

"No. I never could afford one. Besides, I'm not sure I'd like one."

"Oh, I don't mean a fellow who just mixes up your clothes—I mean a general adjutant . . . butler, valet, every-

thing combined." He was silent for a moment, then raised his head. "I had to fire mine about three months ago. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do. He'd been with me for years. I think I liked him better than any man I knew. He wanted to stay for nothing, but of course I couldn't let him do that."

He was silent again, turning the glass in his hand and looking down at it.

"When did your mother die, Banastre?" he asked abruptly.

"When I was very young," said David.

"You're lucky. . . . This house depresses me. I wish I could sell it, but nobody wants real estate now. I can't even give it away. That's a nice state of affairs, isn't it?"

He stared at the wall opposite and swung his foot moodily. He looked at David.

"Have another drink?"

"Oh, no," said David hastily. "I must be going."

Gene finished the whisky in his glass.

"How did you like that motion-picture girl? That—Adele Wyndham?"

"I think she's charming."

Gene looked at the wall.

"She's a bitch," he said in a level voice.

David found himself uncomfortable and unhappy. He contemplated various excuses for escaping. He recognised Gene's mood. At any moment and on the smallest provocation Gene might turn ugly. Gene was in that dangerous state of intoxication where what he said was lucid and logical, while the majority of his thoughts and desires were obstinate and unreasoning. Gene wanted to talk about himself, and in a vague way he was hunting trouble. David felt that he couldn't stand much more of this leg-swinging, white-faced man. On the smooth panelling back of the table, Gene's

shoulders and head made an exaggerated shadow so that it seemed as if another figure, cloaked, were bending over him.

David stood up. Gene looked at him with raised, captious eyebrows.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Home. It's late. I have to get some sleep."

"Well, wait until I have another drink—can't you? Then we'll both go to bed." Gene poured and mixed himself a drink even larger than the first. He drank half of this at one gulp and went back to the table and stared at David with narrowed eyes. "Business partners . . . hum?" He laughed shortly. "I beg your pardon. I mean—I'm an office boy in your firm. We'll have to get drunk together lots of times—vice-president and office boy." He became sombre. "Banastre, I don't believe I'm going to take your job. I don't want it, and I don't believe I'd be any good at business."

"Nonsense," said David, with rough good humour. "We'll talk about that to-morrow."

"No!" Gene's voice became truculent. He stared at David with half-closed, insolent eyes, surveying him up and down. "And besides, I don't know why I should take a job from you. Why should I? Who are you, and why the hell should you be offering me a job. I'm not even sure I like you."

David sighed impatiently.

"All right," he said. "I can't help that. I'm going home now, if you don't mind."

"So you think I'm no good?"

David sighed again.

"Sigh, God damn you!" said Gene.

He looked at the wall for a long moment, his eyes dark and pondering; then he looked once more at his empty glass.

" I guess that's right," he said in a muffled, resigned voice. " Wait a minute, will you ? I'm going downstairs. I'll be right back."

He slipped from the table and walked unsteadily but quickly from the room.

David waited. He picked up a magazine and looked at the illustrations. The house was completely silent. Through the open windows of the room the quiet of the late night entered. Far off, in the depths of the house, there was a muffled crash as if a piece of furniture had fallen. David straightened up in his chair and, getting up, laid the magazine with meticulous precision back on the table. He even rearranged it so that it would lie straight, but his attitude was one of tense, absent-minded listening. Then he went to the head of the stairs. There was no sound. " Are you all right, Fulton ? " he called.

The damned fool had turned off the lights on his way down ! The hall was completely dark. Guiding himself by the rail, David went down the stairs. He thought he remembered a switch he had seen coming up, on the third landing. He ran his hand along the wall without success. Then he found the stair rail again.

" Fulton ! "

In the silence there was a queer, sobbing, gasping sound from the floor below. David's heart stood still and gooseflesh stirred the back of his head. He gripped the stair rail and ran down the stairs. The sound was coming from a room to his left. He felt his way along the wall and came to an open door where the light from outside made an oblong of comparative visibility. He could see the dim shapes of furniture in the room. " Is that you, Fulton ? " he said. Somewhere in this room was that queer, sobbing, gasping sound.

David peered intently, trying to interpret the shadows, and then, with a start, drew back against the door jamb. Moving through the darkness near the floor, darker than the darkness, was a shapeless bundle, and as it moved it sobbed and gasped. David flung out his arm along the wall and his hand touched a switch. With a feeling of relief, he pressed it down. Two lamps on tables sprang into light. David saw that the room was a bedroom, from its appearance the room Mrs. Fulton had occupied. The bundle crawling toward him was Gene.

David ran across the room, and, stooping over Gene, caught him by the shoulders. " What's the matter ? " he demanded. Gene, on his hands and knees, slid forward on his face. David kneeled beside him and turned him over gently. For a moment he stared down at him in silence.

" Why, you've shot yourself ! " he said at length, in a voice weary with hopelessness and disgust.

In the early hours of the morning, David awakened the cook and from her obtained the address of Gene's doctor. This was not a case for any doctor summoned at random, and especially it was not a case for a police surgeon. From the beginning—as soon as he had dragged Gene to a couch and had washed his wounds—David had been sure that Gene was not going to die. He knew something about this kind of head injury because during the war, suffering from a broken leg he had got jumping from a camion, he had lain in a hospital cot next to a man who had been shot precisely as Gene had shot himself.

Gene was not going to die, but the thought of what might happen to him left David sick and with a helpless feeling. He tried not to think about this as he sat by Gene, waiting for the doctor to arrive. The interval of waiting lasted for only a few minutes. Presently the doctor was leaning over Gene, look-

ing at his head. He was a short, nice looking doctor, with a bald face and an almost bald head, and big, rimless spectacles. Over his shoulder he told David to ring for an ambulance.

"How did this happen?" he asked.

"He was showing me a gun," said David, "and the thing went off."

"Don't be a damned fool," said the doctor quietly, without turning around. "I'm this man's family physician. Why did he shoot himself?"

He stepped back from the couch and faced David, his hands in his trousers pockets.

"I don't know," said David wearily. "I was upstairs, and he came down here, and I heard a shot, and then I came down."

"In his mother's room!" said the doctor in a meditative voice. He looked swiftly about him. "I know it well. . . . Have you got a cigarette? We'll go out in the hall and smoke."

David followed him. The doctor selected a cigarette from David's case and lit it, and leaned against the wall. "In his mother's room!" he said again softly.

"Yes," said David. "He took that hard. And then he'd been drinking."

"Very frequently they have been."

"And he's lost a lot of money. There were other things, too!"

There was a silence as the doctor smoked and David continued to look at the wall.

"He's not going to die, is he?" asked David.

"No."

"I didn't think so—I had some experience in the war. It's a clean wound in the . . . what do you call it?"

"The temporal regions."

"And that means?"

"That he'll be blind," said the doctor.

The next morning David sent a cable off to Anita saying that Gene was badly hurt but not fatally; that there was little danger of a fatal outcome. Then he sent a cable to Mr. Wack who at that moment was in Cannes. He had intended to write to Anita in detail until he realised that she would probably leave at once by aeroplane and that his letter would miss her. He was glad this was the case. He found himself with a weary reluctance; almost a paralysis. He didn't want to rehearse the details. Anita would hear them soon enough. Instead, he wrote her a letter to her club in Chicago.

He explained in this that there was nothing he could do for Gene and that it would be—so at least he had decided after difficult thought—the limit of hypocrisy for him to sit by Gene's bedside and hold his hand. Moreover, that it would be both foolish and dangerous for him to remain in Chicago. Foolish, because it might cause talk, and if Anita wanted a divorce, there should be not the slightest trace of talk. Dangerous, because he knew that it would be impossible for him to be near her and not wish to be even closer. Under the circumstances, with Gene, who was still her husband, in a hospital. . . . But he wouldn't go into that. She would understand without further explanation. Fortunately, he had finished his business in Chicago and was now off to Montreal for two or three weeks. He would give her his address and she could write him her plans. He realised that for a while, anyway, she would feel it her duty to look after Gene. As for his desire to see her . . . "darling, there is no need to tell you that; you know. It is only because I so long for you that I am leaving. I kiss your hand. I kiss every inch of you. And I could not stay here in Chicago and be with you, and yet have to treat you as a stranger."

David realised with immense relief how fortunate it was that Anita had not yet written Gene of her intention to divorce him. At least—whatever had been the reasons back of Gene's attempt at death—he—David—and Anita were not responsible.

David was still in Montreal when Anita, Gene with her, came to New York for a day before flying to Florida, and from there to St. Birgitta. He was glad, as he had been in Chicago, not to see her, for if he had been in New York, he knew that her presence, so hedged about, would have been to him something akin to torture. He could afford to wait until this new confusion was over, and wait patiently, but he could not wait patiently if Anita were in the same city.

In Montreal he received a letter from Anita which made her position clear.

" He would understand that just now there was nothing to do but try to get Gene back on his feet. . . . Gene was still suffering from shock. . . . He had lost completely his grip on life. She was more glad than ever that she had in St. Birgitta a sanctuary, a refuge. She was taking Gene back there for a while. It wasn't bad—St. Birgitta. It was surprising how cool, on the whole, the summer had been; that is, if you kept to the sea coast. Her house was delightfully cool. Of course, so she understood, the worst weather was yet to come, and she intended—just as soon as she could straighten Gene out a trifle and collect her own scattered wits—to take him to Barbados or Jamaica, or some cooler spot. But at present, the point was to protect him from the imagined gossip which he thought had followed his action. To offer him isolation. Of course, there had been little talk. Not a word in the papers, for instance. Everyone had been most discreet. But Gene was suffering from the feeling of shame which seemed to

follow unsuccessful attempts at suicide, and could not bear the thought of being near anyone whom he had ever known before. Poor Gene! His sense of importance was large. He felt that what he did was momentous. He didn't seem to realise that in the last three years killing one's self had become a commonplace.

"As for the future, she couldn't, of course, be definite. This catastrophe had mixed things up horribly. She and David would have to be resigned for awhile. Just as soon as she could reconstruct Gene to some extent, just as soon as she could get him physically and mentally better, she would take up her own life again. . . . Dear, darling, David! The world reeled a bit, didn't it? But wasn't it gorgeous that they were both in it at the same time? Suppose they had been born a hundred years apart? How terrible! The very thought of him steadied her and made her happy." "Smile, dear . . . dear darling! Smile! It will all come out right in the end."

David was delighted by a final note on the profession he was leaving. In a magazine he came upon a picture of a young woman in a skin-tight bathing suit advertising cantilever bridges. The remote connection was implied by the first line of the reading matter which said: "Just as you choose your jersies for their endurance under stress and strain . . ."

Henderson gave a farewell party for David and with rare good taste made it a man's party devoid of self-chaperoned coryphées. Toward midnight, Henderson, a trifle drunk, made a beautiful speech. David, himself not unmoved by liquor and sentiment, replied, and, sitting down, was informed by a club servant that a gentleman wished to speak to him on the telephone. He went out into the hall where there were

a couple of telephone booths. The precise, fluting voice of Mr. Wack brought him back to sober alertness.

Yes, he was back in New York for a week or so on business. No, he had come over on the *Île de France*. The *Savonarola* was at Toulon waiting his return. Yes, he was going back just as soon as he could. No, he hadn't yet got to Greece or the Ægean. Would David come up to his hotel in the morning? He had something rather important to say to him.

David, a trifle weary from Henderson's party, found Mr. Wack, attired in a beautiful flowered dressing-gown, breakfasting in his room at nine o'clock.

"You look well, but a trifle thin," said Mr. Wack.

"I've been working like the devil."

"I've no doubt. About finished up now?"

"Completely."

"I liked that letter of yours about your place down in South Carolina. . . . 'Strawberry'? What's its name? I hoped you were going to do that. Remember our talk about it? Of course I'll come down to see you. I may even take up bird shooting again—although I hate to shoot them."

Mr. Wack finished in silence his cup of coffee and lit a cigarette. He touched a bell and his black servant appeared.

"Vernon," he said, "get me those aeroplane schedules from the desk in the bedroom, will you?"

He pushed his chair around so that he faced David.

"Heard from Anita recently?"

"I had a letter from her about four days ago."

"Anything in it?"

"Not much. . . . Details of her daily life. Due to so many people being away, she and the Governor see a lot of each other. Miss Georgie's up here in 'the States.' The Governor wants to make Anita chairwoman of his programme committee for next winter."

Mr. Wack chuckled.

"I hope she won't be there. Here're those aeroplane schedules."

"Paul and Missy are in Majorca."

"They would be," said Mr. Wack contemptuously. He thrust the schedules into David's hand. Suddenly his voice became peremptory, and he got to his feet. "David," he said, "you can get a plane out of Newark to Miami to-morrow morning, and from Miami the next morning you can get a plane to St. Birgitta by way of Port au Prince and San Juan. You can be in St. Birgitta Thursday. You'd better go." He hesitated. "One reason why I came all the way back from Europe was to tell you that."

David frowned thoughtfully.

"Don't be a fool," said Mr. Wack. "You ought to get her out of St. Birgitta. You know that. It's not safe at this time of year."

"Why don't you go? You'll have a lot more influence than I."

Mr. Wack shook his head.

"No." His black eyes were grave. "Besides, I want you there. David, actual presence makes a lot of difference to people. Letters or cablegrams might not shake her. You'd better go, and soon, and get her away. You may regret it all the rest of your life if you don't."

David was silent for a moment.

"All right," he said. "I'll go."

"And we'll have lunch together to-day?"

"Fine!"

It was not until he had left Mr. Wack, that David began to wonder how Mr. Wack knew that he—David—had so much influence with Anita.

[*To be continued.*]

END PAGES

Literary Events and Personalities—A List of Recommended Books for November Reading—A Birthday Number.

THERE is generally a story behind every book, something interesting to be told about its background or the man who wrote it. In response to an advertisement in the personal column of *The Times*, Peter Fleming pushes a canoe several hundred miles up the Amazon in search of Colonel Fawcett, and returns to cock a sardonic eyebrow and write deprecatingly of his experiences in a book, *Brazilian Adventure*, that amused the world as much as it shocked the old-guard of travel-book writers. That is what Eton does for a clever young man. On the other hand, a solemn young Dane, Henning Haslund, lived for two years among the Mongolians, following the precepts of Rousseau and living the life of a natural man; and in *Tents in Mongolia* he writes vividly of life among the Red and White Russians, mad monks from Siberia, Shamans, Nomads and lamas. Here are two young men of the same generation, intrepid, adventurous, springing from different races, penetrating different obscure parts of the world for the mere sake of the adventure. The old Etonian, who is about twenty-six, is scornful of his achievements; the old—what shall we call him, Schleswigian?—is serious about his purpose but becomingly modest about what he has accomplished. Their books are entertaining, and should be read by anybody who relishes adventure; but it is as well to know each author and to detach him from his background: Mr. Fleming, from the dust of the playing-fields of Eton that still trails a cloud of glory after him even in the Amazonian wilds; Mr. Haslund, from the gravity

that hangs like Hamlet's cloak from the shoulders of any Scandinavian no matter where he roams. These books and the men who wrote them have that character and personality that I want to mention each month in these pages in recommending to you a list of books that you should try to manage to read sometime during the month.

READ THESE BOOKS IN NOVEMBER

Proud Servant.	By Margaret Irwin. [Chatto and Windus.]
How Like An Angel.	By A. G. Macdonnell. [Macmillan.]
Jungle.	By Ferreira de Castro. [Lovat Dickson.]
The Serial Universe.	By J. W. Dunne. [Faber and Faber.]
New Minds for Old.	By Esme Wingfield-Stratford. [Lovat Dickson.]
Man of Aran.	By Pat Mullen. [Faber and Faber.]

Margaret Irwin, who has a genius for titles, calls her new book *Proud Servant* [see her earlier ones, *None So Pretty*, *Still She Wished for Company*, *Royal Flush*]. The proud servant is the Duke of Montrose, that most romantic of Scottish heroes, the story of whose life forms the theme of this book.

Margaret Irwin was the youngest of a large family, living in a rambling old house on the top of Highgate Hill, where it was supposed that once Charles II had spent a night. Here, at the age of five, she wrote her first story, a ghost story, written out in large capitals.

Consider in part this author's background. Her grandfather, Colonel Irwin, was Commander of the troops in western Australia—the Irwin river and district were called after him. He was the last Englishman to bear the title Knight of Hanover, a now obsolete honour which had been imported by the Georges.

Her other (maternal) grandfather was General Baker, who was sent out as one of the European representatives to determine the boundary of Greece after the War of Liberation in which Byron lost his life. Another of her ancestors was Jacob Touson, he of undeservedly maligned fame, who bought *Paradise Lost* from Milton for a fiver.

The essay in story-writing at five was followed by a period of quiet. When she was just grown up, she started to write again, and the first things she wrote were fairy tales. Am I reading too much into her past to think that that directed the trend her work was to take? I believe that it did; that the rambling old house on top of Highgate Hill, that Colonel Irwin in charge of the hinterland of Australia, and General Baker on the northern boundary of Greece, and the memory of the room where Charles II once spent a night, even old Jacob Touson dealing with his author John Milton, played a part in the production of the character if not the kind of such books as *Still She Wished For Company* and *Royal Flush*.

Royal Flush was a Book Society choice and sold, I believe, over 30,000 copies. It is interesting that the publication of her new book should coincide with the appearance of this issue of *Lovat Dickson's* which contains her "amiable confession" telling how she came to write her first story. *Royal Flush* and *Proud Servant* place Margaret Irwin in the front rank of contemporary historical novelists. Her own account of the beginning of a career that has been marked with such success gives to this series that particular, autobiographical interest for which it was designed.

Proud Servant is a book that you must not miss.

A. G. Macdonell is a youngish man who appeared out of the unknown in February, 1933, with a satire on literary London, called *England, Their England.* If you didn't read it when it came out, get it now. Age cannot wither its humour and its charm. A few years of free-lance literary work in London seems to have opened all the secrets of how the game is played to this serious-looking young Scot. The book caught on, but before the plaudits had died down Mr. Macdonell had written an admirable historical study, *Napoleon and his Marshals*, which struck everybody as being as sound critical sense as his *England* had struck everyone as being amusing commonsense.

In his new book which appears on November 1st, he seems to have returned to the vein which he mined with such success in *England* earlier. *How Like An Angel* is the story of a boy who is wrecked at the age of two upon a South-Sea Island with three

missionaries—one English, one French, and one German. They educate him, each according to his national lights. When the boy is grown up, they are rescued; but each of the boy's tutors, unknown to each other, comes to the same decision. Each swims ashore in the night, leaving a note to the others, asking them to carry on with the work. The boy, as you might expect, finds Civilization rather different from what he had expected. That, in rough outline, is the story of *How Like An Angel.*

The important thing to notice is that Macdonell is the leader in the field of satire in contemporary fiction. If you like satire, if you like an intelligent, venturesome novel, with a plot that is original in idea and vigorous in development, then you'll like *How Like An Angel.*

The Amazon River district has been popular in recent books of travel. A year ago, an important novel appeared in Portugal, written by a young man, Ferreira de Castro, who had already made a name for himself with several distinguished novels. This was called *Jungle.* Briefly it described the lives of the rubber-tappers in the upper reaches of the Amazon. Now it has been translated into English.

The author's story is a simple narrative of the rubber-trappers' existence in that sombre solitude. De Castro himself lived there, so that this book which is a novel, is also autobiographical. The background is immense. One feels, one is almost oppressed by, the sense of highly-coloured primeval jungle and by the vastness of the Amazon and its tributaries. Parts of the book read like a poem in prose—word-painting on a vast canvas, and dealing with a subject of infinite grandeur, is perfect. It is an impressive book. Don't miss it.

I suggest that your reading be varied. Fiction is not enough alone. For the mind interested in experimental philosophy a new book that promises interest is announced for November 1st, *The Serial Universe,* by J. W. Dunne. Do you remember *An Experiment With Time,* a book which was a sensation a few years ago? That book was either one of the great achievements of human thought, or it involves some astonishing fallacy undetected not only by the author, but by everybody else, including Mr. H. G. Wells, who got so excited about it. Mr. Dunne's theory, superficially, was that dreams are composed of a hodge-podge of the future and the past. The consequences of his theory as he works them out are to give a new meaning to life and its conduct.

The man who wrote that book and this still more stimulating

one, *The Serial Universe*, designs aeroplanes. And if you look in any complete fishing catalogue you will find a whole series of flies "designed by J. W. Dunne."

Mr. J. W. Dunne upholds the intelligent aspirations of this age by plumbing the unknown. But Dr. Wingfield-Stratford wants more than the exceptional man to shine. We can't all be brilliant fellows, but we needn't, Dr. Wingfield-Stratford thinks, be unthinking clods. He would have us make more of our minds. He would have us train our minds for thinking as we train our bodies for athletic contests; not train them to win prizes or to dazzle our fellows with memory tricks, but simply to get the best out of life; and in order to be able to give the best to life.

New Minds For Old is one of the most stimulating books I have read for months. As I read it the conviction came home to me how unlike an angel I had let myself become mentally. There was a paradise there from which I had exiled myself. Careless thinking, undisciplined thinking, lack of thinking when taking thought was necessary, and often undirected thinking when the most careful direction was needed. Concentration, Free Will, Happiness—all these it was in my power to control, just as I could, if I wanted, control my digestion and my powers of sleep. The healthy mind in the healthy body is the ideal state at which all ages have aimed. Dr. Wingfield-Stratford outlines for modern needs the approach to this perfection.

Dr. Wingfield-Stratford was a Cambridge don. Now, after writing a mammoth and complete *History of British Civilisation*, a series of vivid historical studies of the Victorian age, and a number of novels, he lives at Berkhamsted, where he plays admirable cricket, drives a car about the country lanes of Hertfordshire, and occasionally is to be seen exercising a massive dog, named "Uncle," along the towpaths of the Grand Junction Canal. Mind-training has been his private interest all his life. If the reward were a remarkable memory [he can quote at length everything that everybody in any age has written that is worth quoting], brilliant powers of conversation, and the art of concentration and the grace of scholarship, then there is a lot to be said for the new mind philosophy which he introduces in *New Minds For Old*. Anyhow, you will enjoy it for its thoughtfulness and its humour.

One more book should be mentioned. It is by Pat Mullen, who was the boatman in that very successful film "Man of Aran," a picture which appealed both to highbrows and lowbrows, and has added to its

laurels and to the reputation of the British film industry by being awarded the first prize at the recent Venice Film Congress. "Man of Aran," which is also the name of the book, is Pat Mullen's autobiography. He is an Islander, but he has been as far afield as America, and he acted as the go-between during the taking of the picture, interpreting the film people to the Islanders and the Islanders to the film people. The book, written simply and with all the vividness that its subject supplies, should be worth including in your monthly reading.

Other books of importance appearing during the month are :

Political

The Life of Joseph Chamberlain. *Vol. III* [1859 *to the close of* 1900] : Empire and World Policy. *By J. L. Garvin.*

The Editor of the Observer *publishes Book III of his four-volume authoritative life of the great statesman.*

India : Minto and Morley, 1905–1910. *By Mary, Countess of Minto.*

This book describes a most important period of Indian history ; the period during which Indian reform began. It gives a striking picture of Lord Minto as Viceroy, and particularly of his friendship with the Secretary of State, Lord Morley.

Expedition

Watkins' Last Expedition. *By F. Spencer Chapman.*

A full description of the expedition to Greenland upon which the brilliant young explorer, Gino Watkins, lost his life so tragically. The book continues, after the death of the leader, with the story of what was accomplished by other members of the party. It is fully illustrated.

Art and Living

Art and Industry. *By Herbert Read.*

Author of Art Now *and Editor of the* Burlington Magazine; *poet and critical writer on poetry ; formerly Assistant Keeper, Victoria and Albert Museum ; Watson Gordon Professor of Fine Art in the University of Edinburgh ; distinguished military record : these facts constitute the main outline of Herbert Read's career. His new book, which I recommend, shows how the modern artistic spirit is beginning to affect the design of objects which are in everyday use.*

And this short list of fiction

Who Once Eats Out of the Tin Bowl. *By Hans Fallada, author of* Little Man, What Now ?

Sisters' Circus. *By Marian Bower.* *See* Aren't We the Same ? *in this issue.*

Beside a Norman Tower. *By Mazo de la Roche.*

The author of the "Jalna" books transfers her scene to Devonshire. A deft, eloquent study of childhood.

OUR FIRST BIRTHDAY

I had almost forgotten the fact that this is our birthday number. It was a year ago this month that we issued from this office the first number of *Lovat Dickson's Magazine*. We did it to the accompaniment of mournful music supplied in these days by one's cautious friends who are more aware of the depression than of the fact that the sun still shines, the world still spins along, and that human nature hasn't changed much since 1929. We could not be less ambitious, because reduced rates of interest were sickleing over with the pale cast of care, countenances which heretofore had attained that complexion by a rich rather than a full life. People, we thought, still read; and taste in reading hadn't declined with the pound sterling.

Where angels fear to tread, there we were to be found in the month of November, 1933. We didn't rush in; we sneaked in. Less ballyhoo attended the launching of *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* than any similar function within recent years. We didn't advertise, we didn't circularise for possible subscribers. We delivered into the tender care of Messrs. W. H. Smith and their confraternity the first issue of the magazine, and sat back to await results.

Over this last year results have been accumulating. Now nearly seven thousand copies of *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* are sold every month. Not a day goes by but half-a-dozen new subscriptions are to be found in our morning's post. Now to a large Combine there would be something ludicrous in our excitement over such small gains. They increase their circulations by hundreds where we increase ours by tens. Counting their net sales in hundreds of thousands, they are on hail-fellow-well-met terms with the advertisers, and they flourish and wax fat, and become a power in the land.

It would be idle to pretend that we don't envy them their prosperity. But it would be equally false to pretend that we aren't proud of what we have achieved. Every copy of *Lovat Dickson's* is sold on its merits; that, and nothing more. When it ceases to recommend itself to its readers, it will fail; no free sets of the work of the great masters, no free patterns for dresses, or free life insurance will serve to continue its existence on sufferance.

A year old, and talking like that! But call it manly independence and not youthful arrogance. This magazine is meant to entertain you. It is designed for intelligent people; it is meant to be a stimulant, not a soporific. Won't you help it to succeed? If it appeals to you, it will appeal to your friends, for your friends will

have the same tastes and interests as yourself. Get them to fill in this subscription blank, and help us to increase our circulation from seven thousand to twenty thousand, the figure we hope to reach before our next birthday comes round.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

VINCENT SHEEAN was born when the nineteenth century had only a few days to go. He became a foreign correspondent at 21 for the *Chicago Tribune*, and in his three and a half years' service for that newspaper he was present at a variety of disturbances in Europe, including the Rhineland Separatist troubles, the occupation of the Ruhr, the Spanish *coup d'état* of 1928, and the Mateotti affair in Italy; gave a report of Hitler's putsch of 1923 over the telephone when nobody had ever heard of Hitler's name, which had to be spelled, "H for Harold, I for Italy," and so on. Went to Persia for the coronation of Reza Shah (missing it by a day or two, but nevertheless getting there for some of the fuss); went to China in 1927 as a newspaper correspondent . . . an interesting and adventurous career.

H. E. Bates, who is the author of several novels and many short stories, worked at one time as a provincial newspaper reporter, and later as a warehouse clerk. He wrote his first novels and stories while working as a clerk, and though his first ambition was to be a playwright, and his first published work a play, he has since become best known as a writer of stories. A new volume of his stories, *The Woman Who Had Imagination*, appeared a short time ago. Mr. Bates is married, and has two children.

Francis Stuart's chief interest besides writing is horse-racing. He has knocked about the world a bit, as he started life in Australia, went to Rugby for his education, and now lives in Ireland. His books include *The Coloured Dome*, *Try the Sky* and *Glory*.

Martin Armstrong was born in 1882, and was educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge. He served in France with the 8th Btn. The Middlesex Regt. His best-known novels are *The Stepson*, *St. Christopher's Day*, and *Mr. Darby*. He is equally well known as a writer of short stories, and on the shelves of connoisseurs of this art and on those of collectors of first editions are his *Bazaar*, *Sir Pompey*, and *Madame Juno* and other short-story volumes find a prominent place.

Mr. Milward Kennedy is the author of a number of successful detective stories, among them *Death to the Rescue*, *The Corpse on the Mat*, and *Murderers of Sleep*. It is rumoured that his pseudonym

only faintly disguises a well-known international official said to have been educated at Winchester and the War. He is an occasional contributor to *The Times* on the subject of village cricket.

L. D.

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